# Songs of Migration: Experiences of Music, Place Making and Identity Negotiation Amongst Zimbabweans in London

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## Abstract

This work constitutes an effort at foregrounding experiences of Zimbabwean migration that are not necessarily characterised by abjection. Against hegemonic narratives of crisis and instability and the experiences of dislocation that Zimbabweans have gone through, I convey the messiness and complexities of migrancy and inhabiting the elsewhere. I am also tracing some of the elements of a complicated historiography that Zimbabwean presence in Britain reveals, especially what I term an enduring colonial encounter. I explore experiences of Zimbabweans in London mediated by music, as it is experienced in time and place, yet also transcending them in the formations and reproductions of diasporic and transnational being and belonging. Recognising that Zimbabwean experiences in Britain are part of a lineage and genealogy of black, Afro-Caribbean and diasporic struggles, resistance, survival and conviviality, I explore London with other Zimbabweans to understand how music mediates sociality and becomes a way of resisting social death. This idea of social death and abjection, formulated specifically to engage blackness and the afterlife of slavery, I use here as a conceptualisation of the precarities and negative possibilities that come with the diasporic journey and attendant experiences. Inhabiting black bodies, and inserted into the dominant narratives of the migrant, how then do Zimbabweans in Britain negotiate being and belonging? It is here that I turn to music. Music stakes out a cultural space and can be an important part of everyday life, of ritual, myth and art, as avenues for the construction of diasporic being and belonging, the private and intimate, as well as the public and shared collective representations of being Zimbabwean in London. Music does not necessarily transcend the strains of social life, but as a set of practices tuned to and tuned by the flux and flow of human relationships, it is necessarily bound to them.

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## Introduction and Background

This work constitutes an effort at foregrounding experiences of Zimbabwean migration that are not necessarily characterised by abjection. Against the background of hegemonic narratives of crisis and instability and the experiences of dislocation that Zimbabweans have gone through, I am interested in conveying the messiness and complexities of migrancy encapsulated as the elsewhere. Similarly, I am also tracing some of the elements of a complicated historiography of Zimbabwe that Zimbabwean presence in Britain reveals, especially in the sense of what I term an enduring colonial encounter and coloniality. The overarching question I sought to answer is: *how does music mediate belonging and identity amongst Zimbabweans in London?* Related to this were also questions about the constitution of Zimbabwean subjectivities and what it means to write the complex narratives of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere as an embodiment of black existence and alterity in the face of abjection and social death. In this vein, I explore experiences of Zimbabweans in London mediated by music, as it is experienced in time and place, yet also transcending them in the formations and reproductions of diasporic and transnational being and belonging.

Recognising that Zimbabwean experiences in Britain are part of a lineage and genealogy of black, Afro-Caribbean and diasporic struggles, resistance, survival and conviviality, I explore London with other Zimbabweans to understand how music mediates sociality and becomes a way of resisting social death. I borrow the idea of social death from Sexton, and Wilderson (Sexton, 2011; Wilderson III, 2008), to suggest that the diasporic experience for Zimbabweans has been characterised by a dominant narrative of abjection due the socio-political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe that brought Zimbabwean migration to the fore. This idea of social death and abjection, formulated specifically to engage blackness and the afterlife of slavery, particularly in the United States of America, I use here as a conceptualisation of the precarities and negative possibilities that come with the diasporic journey and attendant experiences.

Inhabiting black bodies, and inserted into the dominant narratives of the migrant, how then do Zimbabweans in Britain negotiate being and belonging? It is here that I turn to music. Musicking, as argued by Small, encompasses the aspects of listening, performance and dance and can be an important part of everyday life, of ritual, myth

and art, as avenues for the construction of diasporic being and belonging, the private and intimate, as well as the public and shared collective representations of being Zimbabwean in London (Small, 2011). Les Back points out that the music of the African diaspora is not a recent import to Europe, having been an integral part of numerous European societies since the 18th Century. Through the hands and voices of slave musicians, jubilee singers, jazz orchestras, reggae sound system operators and hip hop DJs (Back, 2000).

I have, to (mis)use language that has been the rage in political spaces of popular culture, 'appropriated' the concept of 'musicking' from Small to encompass acts, practices and performances that are musical, ranging from singing and dance, to listening and attending live music shows, among others (Small, 2011). All musicking, as he argues, is serious musicking, and no one style of musicking can be said to be more serious than another. The recognition of music as being part of, and conveying cultural 'baggage' signifies the social construction of musicality, or what is referred to in this conversation as musicking—and how musicking can be an important part of everyday life, of ritual, myth and art, as avenues for the construction of migrant being and of public images of sentiment. Whether it is listening, dancing, and any other attendant aspects that accompany musicking, one of the questions to ask, as posited by Small is what a 'performance' means when it takes place at a certain time, with certain people taking part. Musicking brings into existence a set of relationships, wherein meaning is created, circulated, reinvented, among other things and although choices and ways of musicking may not be done deliberately or consciously, they are never trivial (Small, 1999).

There are many strands to being Zimbabwean in Britain (McGregor, 2010; Pasura, 2010): asylum seekers; undocumented migrants; students; labour/economic migrants; and those who gained British citizenship. I was not in this instance interested in their paperwork or status, which in many ways would also shape their sense of precarity. This was not necessarily because it was not important, but because I was aware of the contentions around asking people about their status, and the kinds of hierarchies that such questions reproduce, even in a quest to understand. I remembered my moments of being unsure about what certain documents I held meant for being in the elsewhere, and how I detested responding to questions about

bureaucracy. To inhabit the body of the stranger is to also know not being human enough, to be subjected to the processes and policing of bureaucracy that we try to escape when we seek conviviality, and try to make place despite always looming expulsions.

Situating Zimbabweans as part of the black experience in Britain is also asking to what uses are certain kinds of knowledge put? Histories and the circulations of such are not static. Some of the silences, erasures and foreclosures on Zimbabwean narratives are revealing of what do we choose to foreground, and why. What kinds of possibilities do we imagine? The symbiosis between structural and intimate forms of violence, including epistemic violence is also brought into relief. I reflect on my position, on doing ethnography and writing black Zimbabwean bodies in a context where they are racialised, yet these racialisations occupy sometimes silent spaces.

The productive contradictions of the present, ruptures with the past, yet informed by, responding to and contending with these pasts in the present is a crucial aspect of this exploration. The inventions and reconstructions of the idea of Zimbabwe, as they are hegemonically understood, emanate from the historical encounter and condition of coloniality (T. Ranger, 1997, 2004). Zeleza is of the notion that one must recognise the enduring connections between Africa and its diasporas, that the cultures of Africa and the diaspora have all been subject to change, innovation, borrowing and reconstruction, becoming hybrid, multiple and multi-dimensional (Zeleza, 2010).

Who then is Zimbabwean, if the contemporary conversations on Zimbabwe can be traced, for instance, in the post-2000 moment and the expulsion of the white farmers? This is a question that runs throughout in acknowledging the heterogeneity of Zimbabweans in London, by age, gender, generation, and as I point out in the end, race. Predominantly through the experiences with and stories shared by Wala, who left the then Rhodesia for Britain in the 1970's, and those of a younger Zimbabwean woman, Catherine, that are intertwined with religion, I reveal how some Zimbabweans have negotiated place-making and identity in ways that are mediated by musicking. We traverse the different spaces and places of musicking, such as Sanganai bar at Zimbabwe House and the gochi-gochi, barbecue and drinking places where Zimbabweans practice different kinds of conviviality. The different ways and

generational experiences of negotiating being that ensue are also evidence of what Stuart Hall regards as the tensions of similarity and difference in diasporic identities. These negotiations become the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves, in relation to a past we constantly reinvent, a present simultaneously fixed and fluid, and imagined futures(Hall, 1990) . Wala and Catherine did not start out as the automatic protagonists of the work, but as the fortuitous nature of fieldwork is testament to, they became as I sifted through the material in the sense-making moments of ethnographic writing, nodes of the generational and generative possibilities of Zimbabwean presence in Britain. As their different narratives reveal, they have gendered experiences of Britain, shaped by the different historical moments in which they arrived in Britain, and the kinds of diasporic imagination and musical sensibilities they consequently have. The specific context of ethnographic work may make claims to representativeness difficult to hold, yet in their own particular ways, Wala and Catherine, and the different worlds of Zimbabweans they open me to, point to some of the complexities of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere. In that way, they become important in the quest to carve different animals.

Being 'in the field' in London for over a year presented its own challenges. To capture the 'everyday' in a city that operates at a frantic pace, and where many Zimbabweans are part of shift work and a precarious economy is difficult. The field was simultaneously home-in-the-elsewhere for me, and the places and spaces of musicking I was interested in. In many respects, the field was as stable in place and boundedness as it was fluid and mobile. I had to move with the Zimbabweans I was working with, and go where they were going, when I could. This meant moving in and across multiple sites, with these movements shaped by the relationships I had established. These relationships enabled me to access Zimbabwean experience, not just in the ethnographic present, but across time and space.

Narratives, offered here, as those that come before them on music, migration and diaspora, are not necessarily always steady foundations, shoulders to stand on. The questions asked, and the critiques offered, are shaped by different intentions and experiences. In words akin to those of Angela Davis as she delivered the 2016 Steve Biko Memorial Lecture in South Africa, I am also arguing that sometimes we want to think that the questions we have asked, and the answers we proffer, should be

accorded a timeless importance, or accorded place in ways 'others' imagine their worlds. The partiality of ethnographic writing is expressed well by Clifford, who points out that "ethnographic truths are thus inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete. This point is now widely asserted—and resisted at strategic points by those who fear the collapse of clear standards of verification. But once accepted and built into ethnographic art, a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact"(Clifford, 1986:7).

How then can new vocabularies develop without coloniality being averted/inverted/subverted? Why can't blackness be frivolous and live, and not be subjected to social death? Is black frivolity not itself capable of being simultaneously the site of earnest conversation and possibility, as we sing and dance home into being? I ask myself and put Zimbabwe, where Achille Mbembe places Africa (Mbembé, 2001), if we have indeed gone beyond the idea that in the 'Western imaginary' by which here the forms of coloniality and epistemic violence are meant, Zimbabwe is both an imagined and literal site of the contestation between human and animal, so that we must speak of Zimbabwe only as a chimera on which we all work blindly, a nightmare we produce and from which we make a living and which we sometimes enjoy, but which somewhere deeply repels us, to the point that we may evince toward it the kind of disgust we feel on seeing a cadaver.

I am using this here to characterise the kinds of abjection that I at least have experienced with other Zimbabweans, with the socio-political and economic challenges of the country, the precarity and social death of the elsewhere, and the way Zimbabwe, and Zimbabwean lives and bodies, have been written into existence. As I begin to trace the journeys that lead to Zimbabwean experiences in Britain, it will become apparent that some of these ghosts are difficult to exorcise.

## Chinoziva Ivhu[1] Tracing Black Footsteps in A Concrete Jungle[2]

> I'm a firm believer that there is no right answer to the question of the ideal relationship between the subject and the informant or the collaborator or whatever you call the individual, the partner. I think that there's no real ideal relationship. I've seen fantastic ethnographic work come from people who do it in all different kinds of ways. And I think that there is a tendency in all methodological writing about ethnography to rationalize the way that one has done one's own work (Duneier & Back, 2006:547).

It is useful to provide the experiences that form the impetus for this project. My interest in Zimbabwean migration finds early expression during my time in South Africa, and consequently becomes, in Britain, part of my own transnational and diasporic journey.

Sometime in 2011, whilst I was still living in South Africa, I went to a play, a musical called Songs of Migration at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, in which Bra Hugh Masekela was the main act. He blew on his trumpet, as he does, and whilst we tapped our feet lightly, bodies moved to the sound and rhythm. On stage, songs were sung about the black bodies[3] that moved across recent borders to dig up wealth for a white South Africa. These bodies, policed, and allowed presence precisely for their role in aiding colonial accumulation, became part of an economy of desire and legibility, which included acts of resistance and claiming belonging, through song and dance.

[1] Chinoziva ivhu kuti mwana wembeva anorwara is a Shona proverb, which, literally translated, means it is only the soil that knows when a field mouse's offspring is unwell. I use it here as a metaphor to describe the kinds of tensions and struggles with writing Zimbabweans as black bodies into existence in this body of work as these tensions exist as relational, deep seated, implicit, in the soil, as part of a fabric of (not) being of the social, and of institutional process; invisible, (mis)understood, or refused to be understood, as part of the process of reproducing the dominant, of understanding of how to live as, write and (re)present bodies elsewhere.

[2] I intend here to invoke Fanon's image of the black (man), especially in Europe, as in Black Skin White Masks, and also Bob Marley's 1973 song, Concrete Jungle, to imagine the affective aspects of the black body and how it navigates the city, and occupies, and is inhabited by space and place, in concrete ways, and akin to concrete, attempts to fix mobile bodies. This metaphor also points to the simultaneous existence of the notions of the both stable and fluid being in space and place.

[3] One can also think here, for example, through the work of Jemima Pierre (2013) *Race in Africa today: A Commentary* and Hershini Bhana Young (2006) *Haunting Capital: Memory, Text and the black Diasporic Body*, in how they engage with race and the black body as part of a global and transnational/ diasporic blackness. Africans and those of African descent in the diaspora confront 'blackness' in (dis)similar ways. It is this kind of inhabiting the black body that I utilize to locate Zimbabweans as part of the genealogy of black experience in Britain.

Music and performance, in addition to being forms of resistance, also became ways of reclaiming space and place, of making home and habitable being in the face of oppression. An example is the exploration of gendered performances of migrancy, as by Deborah James, or of music, theatre and social life in South African townships during and post-apartheid (Coplan, 2008; James, 1999).

Grammars and languages were created and emerged out of these oppressive spaces that allowed for the expression of dissent and the mockery of power, in both its relatively centralised way and its manifestations in the bodies of whiteness and their symbiotic relationship with the anti-black violence of apartheid South Africa and colonialism and its enduring offspring in general.

The song 'Stimela', much like 'Shosholoza', exists as a telling of that journey, in the real and the symbolic, as the trains carried migrant bodies, men, from across Southern Africa and spit them into the bowels of the mines, that happily swallowed them, to only spit them out as spent limbs that had dug enough for the *baas*. The inside and outside become blurred, from the exterior of space to the interior of the transport, and then of the hollowed out ground, within which these bodies are inside, yet remain outsiders, whose movement is controlled by the infamous *dom paas*, which, though granted, also limits movement to only certain places that the '*baas*', authority, allows—places and spaces fit for the native, and regarded as non-threatening, offering the colonial administration the opportunity to monitor and control black bodies, in addition to stifling discernible dissent. This colonial economy and the logic of power and its calibration of desires then meant that these bodies were welcome, and needed, as far as they were useful in oiling the levers of expropriation and accumulation, but dispensable. The logic of apartheid, in and as a separate development, claimed the benevolence of oppression in establishing reserves, ostensibly for the protection and well-being of the native. History, as it has been written, tells a different story. The structures and process of apartheid exploitation led black people in South Africa to establish places, illegal and at times transient, such as *shebeens* in the townships, that became the foci of musical performance and circulation, and spawned the likes of Bra Hugh Masekela. This music became part of refusing to die, a voice of dissent, and a way of speaking back to power, in languages that it did not always understand, as animate and represented by the will to power and dominance of many by a few. These

spaces and their musics also pushed many into exile, as the story of Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba, among many others, show.

I have briefly sketched out this moment as one of the embryonic origins, among many influences, that gave rise to my interest in exploring the relationships intertwining music, identities and belonging amongst Zimbabweans as part of my own journeys from Harare to Johannesburg, and then to London. These journeys were shaped by music, which remained not only a soundtrack, sometimes unacknowledged, that shaped how I and many other Zimbabweans found themselves in, and out, of space; but became a vehicle through which we traversed landscapes that were simultaneously unfamiliar, exciting, and often unwelcoming—if not in blatant ways, then in the unspoken daily struggles—the movements of bodies, towards and away from you, the darkness that engulfs the alienated, in moments of physical and structural violence. The lived and structural violence of race and racism alluded to as part of apartheid and colonialism is not absent in the London of today either. The manifestations differ, yet, from the accounts and experiences gleaned, and the demonisation of the 'alien', the stranger that comes and stays (Ahmed, 2000; Simmel, 1950), this other that refuses to go away, it seems to remain part of the condition of (black) existence. Enoch Powell and his ideas are never relics, it seems (Powell, 1968).

The examples emanating from the above-mentioned musical and the work by Deborah James and David Coplan also already alerts us to the gendered realities of colonial mobility, and the relationships that consequently manifest in the kinds of femininities, masculinities and sexualities, in and of the often-fictitious post-colony. Some of these tensions also find expression in this conversation, particularly in relation to how Zimbabweans in Britain become part of reconfigured gendered ways of being that interact with the space and place they find themselves in. The realm of music also provides a potent avenue of exploring how gendered bodies navigate belonging.

I have asked myself what the place of this part is in this broader discussion. I have thought it important to have a few points regarding the general process of (not) writing, of struggling to engage with material, and the materiality of narrative and experiences as translatable elements of intellectual legitimation. In this moment, I

have also thought it useful to tease out some of the aspects of trying to write (black) Zimbabwean bodies, whose racialisation emerges as pronounced and deleterious in the elsewhere, yet remains a defining, if not as hegemonically acknowledged, way in which these bodies are inserted into academic narratives of the figure of the 'African' migrant. This opens up spaces for a conversation of the understandings of the Zimbabwean, maybe not precisely as black-British, but certainly as black in Britain, as separate and different, or as sharing affinities, to those categorised as 'African' (Gilroy, 1993a).

In many respects, these are, or become, perceived as similar or the same. The generation of Zimbabweans that arrives in the 1970s constitutes, in the moment of my experiences with them, and in self-identification, as simultaneously Zimbabwean, African and black-British. Experiences of Britain thus became allied with those of other black/African/ Caribbean bodies in this elsewhere, as Mudhara Wala, who holds my hand through the London scene, exemplifies. Those arriving after the year 2000, like Catherine, continue to negotiate a similar transition. One then must ask whether it serves the purposes of categorical clarity, temporal classifications, expediency, or others, to (not) recognise the being and belonging of Zimbabweans in Britain as part of an understanding of these very epistemologies, methodologies or ontologies of blackness, whatever they may be. Or of a lineage of the historical and present coloniality of being, claims to knowing and relating to the black body as migrant and vice versa. I am aware, to borrow from Rinaldo Walcott, and I locate, being Zimbabwean in Britain, and the attendant musicking, as part of 'black expressive culture', and what also seems to be the daunting duty of critical engagement with this musicking as part of the archive, living and otherwise, of black expressive culture, in the face of the risk of having little historical and contemporary frames to make sense of it as such, in the case of Zimbabwe, that is (Walcott, 1999a, 1999b). In the words of Kalra, the translation of the experiences of Zimbabweans, as embodying a certain iteration of blackness in Britain, into an ethnographic text is therefore embedded in sets of power relationships that are made most obvious in a deconstruction of the techniques that are deployed to make truth (Kalra, 2006). Writing this version of Zimbabwe and being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere remains entangled in such power relationships.

The contradictions that emerge from the experiences of being Zimbabwean in Britain are akin to Sarita Malik's assertions (Malik, 2001). In what can be read as an indictment of state sanctioned multiculturalism in tracing the representations of blackness, particularly on television in Britain, Malik notes that the act of asserting ethnic or cultural difference over cultural 'otherness' manifests itself in the formation of new styles and modes of cultural production, which implicitly reject earlier assimilationist projects. These manoeuvres, or what we might call the pull between 'translation' and 'tradition' have signalled themselves as contradictory impulses: there are those which 'reidentify' with places and 'cultures of origin'; those which produce symbolic forms of cultural identification; those which have developed 'counter-ethnicities'; and those which have revived traditionalism, or cultural and religious orthodoxy, or political separatism, and so on.

With other Zimbabweans, I have often remarked how the convivial space of Sanganai, the bar space that I engage with as a place of musicking, can at times evoke the *shebeen*[4], if not in the inventions of a gendered conviviality, then in its ambience and being physically underground. It is a hole in the earth where that other elsewhere is temporarily suspended, as another slides through and over it, leaking vestigial elements that will also sit, slide and slither, and sometimes escape and return, as memory. In her 2009 book The Ministry of Pain, Dubra Ugresic captures these slips and slides in emphasising that the moment of leaving, of departure, especially of place, whilst being a moment of possible escape, to renewal, the new or respite, is also a moment of death. These shebeen-like inventions that I encounter, such as Sanganai and the converted sports clubs, spaces and places of musicking, both contain and leak out the narratives, the emotions, the experiences of negotiating being when the notions of the inside and outside have collapsed, and refuse abjection. People, black bodies in this elsewhere then, in some moments, can be perceived as trying to resurrect or recreate what they fear has died, or might die, in this elsewhere.

There are, in addition, the generational possibilities of remembering and forgetting, erecting pasts in the mind, prancing around these interstices. Wala and his generation

[4] The shebeen, or a drinking den is a place where illicit liquor can be accessed. It was historically used as a convivial place and space for black people under colonial oppression, who were not allowed to inhabit many areas of the urban space under colonial laws and the disciplining of the black body

congregated around places such as the old Africa Centre, which used to be in Covent Garden, but is now lost to the changing cityscape of London. Issues around gentrification and new modalities of being African and black in Britain means younger Zimbabweans navigate place and space differently, and construct past and present through music in ways that may correspond to the historical realities of the moment. In the place of Enoch Powell and the appropriated skinhead subculture during Wala's youth, they have the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Brexit[5] frenzy.

It is also, this liminal space of the in-between, one of, even temporarily, putting to death, or to sleep, the possibilities of precarity and abjection. We dance, in this space, as I sometimes feel, the dance of life and of death. They slide into each other, in and out of the black bodies, in this field where I, too, find myself, tracing these footsteps with a colour, in this concrete jungle.

Parallels amongst Zimbabweans, which I have encountered traversing London, and as part of this historical and present journey—for instance Paul Lunga and township jazz in Brixton, Thomas Mapfumo and Chimurenga music, Oliver Mtukudzi and his Tuku music—exist as living and mobile monuments to these histories and journeys, the different routes that find Zimbabweans dispersed, with them the different musics of 'home', and those of elsewhere that come to form the repertoire of their 'everyday'. Whilst walking one evening with a friend, between Hoxton and Old Street, on a road lined with Vietnamese restaurants, I saw someone working at the door of a gallery, whom I thought I recognised. An old man, white-haired and in the typical black attire of security people or staff at London venues. I walked towards the door, and was only able to pass on a perfunctory greeting. I had recognised the old man correctly, and he was indeed working in some capacity at the door of an art gallery, where some young people were sipping on some wine and enjoying some conviviality, from what I could surmise from the outside. I was saddened that this old man, who was at one point a celebrated musician in his country of 'origin', a place he sometimes calls home, was working at a gallery door, in the cold of night, to facilitate the enjoyment and safety of other bodies. It is of course a story that is familiar to many places and artists, that they

[5] A referendum held in June 2016 produced a result calling for the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union, termed Brexit. The campaign for Brexit was characterised by blatant anti-immigration and racist rhetoric, and witnessed in the aftermath of the vote, a rise in reported hate crime.

cannot live off their art alone, or at all. In such moments, one's desire to write against abjection feels defeated, as the routes taken to the elsewhere seem to overwhelm in how they lead to social death. Is this new place, home now, then a space in which the body of an old black man, who could have a musical legacy, becomes a buffer, an Other, a stranger who opens and closes doors, and makes safe the bodies of others? The unsettling aspects of the intersections of music and place making in this episode are heightened to me as they signify an affectation of place and belonging characterised by precarity. The feelings of sadness and frustration emanate in the way I cannot even greet this man properly, and how he greets me furtively and immediately closes the door. It leaves me wondering if it is because he did not expect to meet someone who knows him as a well-established performer in his previous life, and in some fragments of his present. Is he hyper-sensitive to his hypervisibility as a body that stands between the outside and the inside, bordering this place and space in the same manner that, in most probability, safety and comfort are significantly bordered for him too? I imagine that maybe if a place like the Africa Centre were what they used to be, I would be seeing him there performing often, and we could be convivial in our own way, not perfunctory and furtive, and not disciplined by precarious work or inhabiting strange bodies that are simultaneously inside and outside.

This struggle with feeling in such instants is captured by Sarah Ahmed in her exposition on atmospheric walls.

> There was quite an atmosphere. It might be electric; it might be tense. It might be heavy, light. Maybe an atmosphere is most striking as a zone of transition: an upping, a downing. The laughter that fills the room: more and more. An occasion is being shared; the sounds of glasses clinking; the gradual rise of merriment; we can hear things get louder. Or a sombre situation: quiet words, softly spoken; bodies tense with the effort of holding themselves together by keeping themselves apart. The sound of a hush or a hush that follows a sound, one that might interrupt the solemnity, piercing through it, turning heads (Ahmed, 2014).

Experiences of musicking with Zimbabweans are here then also experiences of feeling, of affect, of affecting and being affected. I navigate this world aware that, as is apparent throughout, my outside and inside of this space intermingle, and are in

flashes present and absent; that belonging and forms of identification are not just narratives, pasts and presents that are shared or imagined, but are also mediated by affect. My body, and the bodies of those who inhabit the same spaces as I do, affect each other, and are affected, in ways that may produce, or are emblematic of the atmospheric walls that Ahmed refers to. In my reckoning, writing against abjection may feel like butting one's head against an invisible wall, or walls that are imagined, as this affection is felt, embodied and materialises, even in convivial spaces.

A lot of thinking around what the thrust of the larger conversation, the golden thread, of my study is has constantly shifted, betraying how incoherent the (my) 'migrant' experience, as life, often is—and how the construction of a coherent narrative, as translation, and transposition, of supposed 'ethnographic' experience into legible narrative and chronology as well as theoretical 'morphology' betrays a constant tension with method, structure and space, as canonised understandings of how to write into temporal existence the (black) body from, and in, the elsewhere. One then comes to terms with the realisation that even their own body, that they have imagined as coherent, is not, especially in contexts where bodies take up, or have meanings imposed on them, as part of a larger bureaucratic definition of who belongs where, how, when and so forth.

I also intend to reveal, and hope that it becomes apparent, that this conversation is indeed about, but not solely about, music. It exists in the realm of sound, rhythm of and as sociality, what Simmel called 'sociation' (Simmel & Hughes, 1949), of our understandings of the real and the virtual, in those spaces that fight to fit into the given categories of thought and analysis, and those that, frankly, will be as messy as 'migrant existence' regularly is imagined to be, yet is not always.

Often, there is a pull to confidently ascertain, in representation, what things are, or not; what they possibly could be, or could not be. In the case of the black Zimbabwean body, this is not any less true considering that the stories of migration have been held out as the face of a particular postcolonial cancer, of crisis, and the ironic search for sanctuary and salvation at the heart of empire, even in the immediate sense, making the postcolonial a fiction. This is whilst liberal claims to multiculturalism, diversity and the gamut of fads that come to describe attempts at engaging with difference tend

to crash and fall, with questions around whether the ugly underbelly of racism and xenophobia can ever be consigned to the dustbin of history, or it will always grace us with its presence.

It is this context, of course with many other manifold political, social and economic factors, that shapes how these bodies are designated and bordered nationally, as well as in the everyday, as Zimbabwean, and how they exist. The songs, the music that is carried by these bodies, and what these bodies, in space, and place, relate to as musicking in the elsewhere, is my interest. I remain reflexive about the language and the lens through which I seek to portray these narratives and experiences, and about my ability to relate the experience of the black body in instances where its racialisation is sometimes denied, exists as implicit, or is deployed, ostensibly in the service of establishing belonging, as integration, or as a re-inscribing of the ways in which this body, in the words of Hortense Spillers, exists as already marked. Therefore, writing about, writing 'them', into existence in this way might just become part of what Fred Moten has described as the flipside of white-hipster fetishisation of these bodies as raw material, as ladders to credentialisation, whose credence lies in the translation of the body and its experiences into legible modes of articulation (Moten, 2003; Spillers, 1987, 2006).

The anxieties of writing the experiences of Zimbabweans I have traversed London with also arise from not wanting to be dominated by epistemic violence, as articulated by Mignolo. How do I write these experiences, in a way that displays my discomfort, whilst at the same time fulfilling the codes of academic/intellectual expectation (W. Mignolo, 2011b)? It is the tension, that I allude to elsewhere, of acknowledging that, in this moment of writing, as in many others, past and present, black bodies continue, in crisis, or in the manner of the celebrated exotic, or resilience, or many other instances of fetishisation, to make good fodder for narratives of credentialisation and intellectualisation. This happens at the same time as we claim transcendence and a critical introspection that allows the treatment of subject (object) in ways that revoke a crisis of representation imagined to be in the past. In arguing for the imperative to end the 'negroe's self-division', Sylvia Wynter turns to Fanon, arguing that one must recognise that to speak does not mean only to be able to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language. It means, above all, to assume a culture, to

support the weight of a civilization (Wynter, 2001). I am obviously not the Atlas to hold the sky of being Zimbabwean, neither do I want to be the Sisyphus.

I feel this more even as I exist in this conundrum of the false dichotomy of that inside-outside, without any authority or desire to claim objectivity, or internalise the very discourses of power that produce black embodiment in the elsewhere, as of elsewhere. What does it mean then for me to desire the engagement, movement and experience of these sounds that make up, define, circulate and mark bodies as Zimbabwean in messy ways?

The poverty of language and tragedy of hegemonic narrative and categorisation is also that even as I call these bodies, people, my friends, Zimbabwean, this form of identification exists as fractured, as Ndlovu-Gathseni and Pasura, for instance, show (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a; Pasura, 2008). In the process of doing this work, and in recognising how Zimbabweans inhabit London, and wider Britain, as raced/racialised bodies, I have also become interested in, and recognised the absence of, an engagement with white Zimbabweans—what I have regarded to be whiteness as absence and invisibility. What, in the dominant narrative of Zimbabwe, crisis, and music, allows this whiteness to exist as interlocutor, victim and voice, yet not as the body of the migrant? My motivation is not an interrogation of whiteness per se, but an attempt, in revealing more of the complexities around being and belonging, at troubling the safety and stability of some of the given categories and assumptions about being Zimbabwean, and the often seemingly unchanging toxicity of the discourses of power in narrating the black Zimbabwean experience. The foundations that exist, the modes and terms of reference, the levers of intellectual and academic 'knowledge' about Zimbabwe, establish what become accepted and acceptable narratives about Zimbabwe. Am I then reproducing such, or asking different questions? As part of academic process, one tends to gravitate towards acceptance, or being acceptable.

There is also obviously the discomfort that the writing of the self, in explicit ways, as part of narrating the experiences of 'others' can come across as navel gazing, as emotional and subjective, based on where and how they are located, or locate themselves. I have also, cynically, come to terms with the fact that I might just end up

writing like a 'native informant', providing a scope of material of possibility on Zimbabwean life. There are no answers here, I did not seek to provide any. Just questions and glimpses. I understand that one of the overriding demands of research endeavour is to establish how the 'product' of the research (in this corporate sense of work) provides answers to the questions asked. The task of sense-making continues through this conversation.

One example is at the level of gaining access, establishing rapport and friendships. I benefited from already having Zimbabwean friends and family in Britain, who led me to other Zimbabweans. One would expect that certain ease of access to allow a smoother transition into 'intellectual' inquiry, yet this created an unease around broaching the element of turning the life histories and experiences of people mostly regarded as friends into academic fodder. Aspects of Zimbabwean sociality, which might have elicited more interest from the 'outside' possibly eclipsed me as taken for granted, ways of being manifest in those in Britain, as they are in me, a recent arrival. I also had assumptions of the nature of political polarisations and views amongst Zimbabweans, from personal and collective experiences of the politics, which did not always hold true. The memory and experience of music and being was already etched.

For all this and many other instances of being an insider, I was also on the outside of the peculiarities of Britain, of London and the relationship that Zimbabweans have developed with the wider African diaspora, as well as how they feature in blackness in Britain. It is something I glimpsed through literature, then experience and continue to learn and explore. Variously, I have had to traverse the different kinds of fissures and fragmentations (historical/generational, political, economic) that define certain nodes and modes of being Zimbabwean in Britain. For instance, some older Zimbabweans, arriving in Britain in the late 1960s and '70s who have straddled the era of the liberation struggles and black British belonging, seem to have a very low regard for those they see as the depoliticised, economic migrants of the 21st century. Yet even they exist in a space where, like any other, multiple ways of being abound, and younger Zimbabweans in Britain, with a differing political and musical present, negotiating being as of their time, space and place, are no less political.

The hierarchies and internal forms of differentiation and the contradictions therein are always a reminder of the heterogeneous nature of diasporic formations, and the significance of recognising how Zimbabweans are multiply embedded. It recalls he way Stuart Hall challenges fixed binary notions of identity and belonging, showing how difference exists simultaneously with continuity, and how meaning and representation are never finished or completed, but are also transient. I have thought of this in how I am choosing to frame this conversation, particularly around the contentions of race and class. I have chosen, for this discussion, to not centre or focus on class. This in no way diminishes its significance in exploring Zimbabwean lives in Britain. It is merely a conceptual and theoretical choice, unto which class is bound to be made a future consideration, outside this work, as part of the internal hierarchies of belonging. This is also to say the limitations of work that may not adequately engage class are noted, yet do not constitute the thrust of this work.

## Why Don't You Carve Other Animals?

A substantive body of work on Zimbabwean 'migrants'—bodies in the elsewhere, as I will repeatedly refer to in this discussion, especially in South Africa where I have lived and conducted some research and Britain, subject of the present conversation—has provided an important foundation for understanding the complexities of (imm)mobility, especially in relation the socio-political and economic crisis of the past decade and counting in Zimbabwe. Part of the present struggle, if it can be characterised as such, is how to begin or continue to theorise being Zimbabwean outside, or not over-archingly defined by, the sensational politics that have relatively over-determined Zimbabwean-ness, hence the choice of music, which is still no less political. This means drawing from work on other migrant communities (no use reinventing the wheel here) as well as making the case for theoretical and philosophical complexity along different routes.

As I have already pointed towards, to write of an outside, and to also acknowledge how music and musicking exist within, and can inherently cohere with politics, constitutes in this instance a rejection of an outside in itself. It caters more to a movement, a dancing and swinging around the politics, bounded and institutional, carried by and within Zimbabwean bodies, even in realms imagined as outside the dominant tropes of the politics of Zimbabwe, or being Zimbabwean. Transnational

movements and connections by Zimbabweans have already been indicated as creating novel spaces for migrants in which (re)construction of socio-cultural norms and values can be gleaned (Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Vertovec, 1999, 2001, 2004). This also means, then, that even when I make use of an inside, it is not always enduring, a contingent inside. It might seem easy or rather convenient, writing today as a young Zimbabwean in the shadows of numerous forms of representations of Zimbabwe, to be responding to, resisting or acquiescing to these dominant modes of writing Zimbabwe. I am arguing, as an approximation in this case, for a messier reading of the experience of the Zimbabwean elsewhere. After all, as an act of foisting ethnographic chronology, I am trying to make sense of an I, a me, an 'auto', in writing and translating, embodying a particular messiness, whilst suturing narratives and experiences of musicking with the Zimbabweans I have been fortunate to spend time with.

Borrowed from Yvonne Vera's short story collection of the same name, the title of this section, *Why Don't You Carve Other Animals* is literal and also functioning as a metaphor that—in swimming these murky waters of re-presenting and retelling stories of fungible bodies—argues for the significance of telling varied and multifarious stories on Zimbabwe and Zimbabweans elsewhere, of recognising the complexity of migrant and diasporic existence and experience in ways that enable one to cognise that those we call migrants, or members of diaspora(s), are first and foremost people, *vanhu* in Shona, who are as much part of the banal and the quotidian as any other. *Munhu, humunhu, unhu* in Shona all refer to the substance of personhood. It argues a core that exists, that makes us *vanhu*. At risk of bastardising the conceptual depth of the characterisation in Shona, I will say it is closer to an understanding of humanity, or the human. That is to say, despite how 'being from elsewhere' can become overarching in hegemonic representations and understanding, living elsewhere remains that: living. One way for me to attempt to tell this different story, of difference, deference, sameness, similarity and simulacrum, has been exploring parts of the lives of some Zimbabweans in London, mediated by and through the lens of, music. It is an excursion into spaces of conviviality and sometimes pleasure, not devoid of politics, but shaped by, and shaping such, at different levels.

This also sets the foundation of my epistemological and ontological conflicted and contested positioning, as I elucidate later. My personal discomfort—especially in moments of recognising, in Fanonian terms (Gordon, 2005, 2007), highlights how such bodies already exist as distorted through and in the (post)-colonial gaze—at turning Zimbabwean black bodies into a spectacle, and into my body as existing concurrently outside and within this migrant-music-belonging and identity nexus, the anxieties of simultaneously looking at 'others', at and as oneself, and being looked at. This discomfort means I seek a positionality and embodiment that is not subject, or rather subservient (as one may only imagine, but not be free of, the discourses that define their entrance, existence and egress of spaces always defined by power) to the binaries of a polarised politics that has dominated Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean politics, and the consequent representations—spectacles that re-inscribe a version of alterity which implicitly embeds and re-invokes historically produced relationships of knowing and the known.

In another way, this might be seen as a conversation about methodology, access, subjectivities, and being a (black) body in-the-field. This field, London, and this field of the black body, and the other field, inte(r)llecting, in the Bourdieuan vein, in contested ways, for the apparent accumulation of some sort of capital, that should be manifest in said coherence and argumentation of this work, as one instantiation. Mindful of the complexities of the field, and as a way of opening (as in leaving that pot of argumentation to leak, that frame broken and unfixed) the conversation of the histories of Zimbabwean presence in Britain, I ask what the possibilities, theoretical, philosophical, or otherwise, are, of thinking and writing about the routes and roots of Zimbabwe, that Zimbabweans take to, and in Britain, differently, if at all (Clifford, 1983, 1990, 1997b).

One may perceive my entry into the issue of locating myself in the current work as the clichéd insider/outsider conundrum, which operates in miscellaneous ways, such as the imagined Britain that we have already met, shared histories and spaces in/from Zimbabwe, and a shared migrant existence in Britain. This, being on the 'inside' of being Zimbabwean has also existed around the grammars of relating and translating historically informed ways of inhabiting transient and transitioning bodies, whose blackness, for instance, transforms through and across space and place, from being

Zimbabwean, to being black, African and maybe equally contested (black) British, engaging with a vast array of migrant and diasporic identifications (Gilroy, 1993a, 1993b, 2013; Hall, 1990, 1993).

## Writing Zimbabwe, Doing Ethnography in The Elsewhere

> The scarred hand of exile was dry and deathlike, and the lines of its palm were the waterless riverbeds, the craters and fissures, and dry channels scoured out of the earth by relentless drought. My own hands, with their scars and callouses and broken fingernails, sometimes seemed to belong not to me but to this exacting punishment of exile. (Marechera, 1993:125)

I decided, after a while of responding to the usual questions about what my research is on, that I would say it is an attempt not to write about Robert Mugabe. It is my effort at holding a cow's tail, dipping it in a concoction, in the manner of the *sangoma, n'anga*, the traditional healer and trying to exorcise a political and psychological ghost that seems to haunt some of us when it comes to Zimbabwe. I could claim that it haunts the nation, but I would falter on ascribing to a collective something I cannot yet prove or argue coherently, as well as calling a 'nation' a collection of people who may be struggling to perceive themselves as such (Mlambo, 2013; Raftopoulos & Mlambo, 2008). Regardless, I would relent and provide some hum-drum explanation about Zimbabweans and music and identity in Britain. The categories I would like to think of as containers, things within which I tried to locate and relate complex experiences, to make of this ethnographic grail something that is legible. The research journey, the ethnographic one as I have experienced it, is a fluid one. I expect my narration to offer some coherence, whilst also sharing glimpses of the moments of stability and fluidity as experienced.

It seems the exorcism has not worked. Not that I have ended up writing about Robert Mugabe. No. The politics of Zimbabwe remain inescapable in framing and impinging on the understanding and experience of being Zimbabwe(an), and being so in the elsewhere. What one does not count on in vouching for such an exorcism is the many other ghosts that are there, that lurk on the road, bends and side streets, in the alleyways, even the lit ones, of this diasporic journey. I imagine this haunting is not

exclusive to this project. Many confront it, in different ways, and to different degrees and ends.

Such hauntings have shaped the highs and lows of this journey, the joys of interacting with Zimbabweans of different backgrounds and persuasions, the challenges of survival and focus in fluid and precarious fields, and the often nagging questions about the relevance of one's work and how to locate it within the wider intellectual debates, and also in relation to a politics of intellectual emplacement in which forms of epistemic violence and coloniality, as hegemonic, remain firm, though contested, and are one of the ghosts one may not have initially thought they would contend with as much.

I share my thoughts and experiences here with no delusions as to their adequacy, and with the awareness that writing Zimbabwe is a continuous site of struggle. At one book reading I attended at the Waterstones in Piccadilly, a Zimbabwean writer asked me when we would start writing about 'others', not 'ourselves', when I had explained my work to her. I wondered, do I even know enough about this thing, this 'us' that we assume exists, that is Zimbabwe? Maybe one day, when I have mustered the confidence and 'power' that gives the assurance that we can reach complete understandings of 'others' and circulate those as knowers, maybe. For the moment, I will attest to the partial composition of my explorations and understandings.

What I hope is that the work can share, even so slightly, some of the moments, the banal, the exceptional, the feelings that those we, I, share the experience of the 'field' live with, as those categorised as migrants, those from elsewhere, in the elsewhere, whose feelings, fears, fathoms, which, if one remains in any way invested in the increasingly becoming defunct idea of the human, are, and could be, or not, like everyone else. As argued by Seigworth and Greg, there is no single unwavering line that might unfurl toward or around affect and its singularities, (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010), let alone its theories, only swerves and knottings, perhaps a few marked and unremarked intersections as well as those unforeseen crosshatchings of articulations yet to be made, refastened, or unmade. As a retelling of ethnographic episodes, of feelings and thoughts, especially those related to musicking in the elsewhere, the narrative is peppered with such affective moments.

This is especially important in imagining an elsewhere that is not necessarily characterised by abjection. The Zimbabwean story, and the many others that accompany it, confront certain forms of abjection that follow this figure of the migrant. It is crucial, in engaging with this abjection, as material, as affective, to recognise that conviviality does not die, even in an elsewhere where social death is a constant threat. Here then, in this discussion, the 'affective turn' emerges from a concern with the intimate textures of everyday life and the marginalising or silencing of specific experiences, often gendered or raced (Anderson, 2014). Similar concerns are shared by Sarah Ahmed, who asks how it 'affects' home and being-at-home when one leaves home. I must here borrow from Ahmed in full.

> Home is here not a particular place that one inhabits, but more than one place: there are too many homes to allow place to secure the roots or routes of one's destination. It is not simply that the subject does not belong anywhere, The journey between homes provides the subject with the contours of a space of belonging, but a space that expresses the very logic of an interval, the passing through of the subject between apparently fixed moments of departure and arrival (Ahmed, 2000:77).

I can say, for now, that I am also interested in what I would, albeit playfully, call the four Ds: decolonise; decentre; destabilise; and de-reify. One could add other Ds like demystify, defenestrate and deracinate. As a play at and with language, at refusing that sensibility and stability that categories lend to ways of writing, thinking, imagining and seeing the world. To play with these is not to treat the matters at hand any less seriously. It is, after all, a discussion where explorations on music and being converge, and the least I can do, even in writing, is play and dance, in earnest.

The idea of the decolonial is critical in thinking through the work, not as beholden to any 'school' of decolonial thought per se, but as homage to the continuous efforts at exploring narratives that not only give 'voice to the margins' in the manner of the 'subaltern[6] speaking', but recognise and reject the kinds of epistemic violence that

[6] Although I do not explicitly engage with 'postcolonial theory in this discussion, it is important to recognize the geneaology of thought that runs through, for instance, work such as Spivak (2001), Focault (1972) and

often imbue the taken for granted ways in which 'knowledge' as hegemonic is gathered, produced and circulated about Zimbabwe. This raises the ontological, epistemological, and ultimately pedagogical questions (writing and existing as I do as a product of such pedagogical systems), some of which I come back to in the sense-making exercise of establishing legible ethnographic narratives (Mignolo, 2011a, 2011b; Mignolo & Escobar, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013a, 2013b).

This would, one imagines, be at the fore of most writing on Zimbabwe, especially because of the contestations around what I am calling the fiction of the postcolonial, or postcolonial fictions[7]. The ructions between Zimbabwe and Britain, and what is amorphously referred to as 'West', has repeatedly brought into relief the coloniality that has historically shaped such relationships, and consequently the writing and circulation of knowledge about them. These cartographies, that map socio-political and economic perceptions and realities, are often, as expected, amenable to power- as in the structures that 'hold and exercise power, as well as in the way bodies navigate these cartographies, through representation, and as part of lived realities. What does it mean then to aspire to the decolonial in writing Zimbabwe?

Related to this is the importance of decentering not just the colonial logic, the coloniality of knowing and being known, but the constitution of the anthropological or ethnographic (Zimbabwean) subject and the processes of 'subjectivation' (W. Mignolo, 2011b). This, like the other Ds, is a similarly lofty claim. But as I say, if not made explicit, I hint at these issues, as part of the effort, for after all, even this is an exercise in learning. What is this migrant? Who is Zimbabwean? What fundamental aspects shape one's understanding of the history and present of being Zimbabwean? Whose writing, words, film, authority? Can I write myself, legitimately, into this experience, and 'know' it in credible ways, both as an 'insider and outsider', as an Other, inhabiting the body of the stranger, the strange?

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Mbembe (2001). The engagement with critiques of representation and how the production and circulation of knowledge(s) is an ongoing conversation, animating work on decolonial theory and epistemic decentering.

[7] I use here the idea of postcolonial fictions as a way of questioning the absence of coloniality both in Zimbabwe and in the 'diaspora', precisely at the point at which the myths of nationhood on which the idea of Zimbabwe depends are contingent on (a) floundering narrative(s), and the erstwhile colonizer Britain remains prominent. Such an understanding also shapes the kinds of slippages I grapple with as part of life in the elsewhere, living on the edges, of sometimes he real, and what seems spectral.

Following the way Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie cautioned in the now famous talk on the dangers of a single story, I am also asking here what it means to 'destabilise' the dominant conversation on Zimbabwe's elsewheres. There is no doubt that the turn of the century produced a politics, in Zimbabwe and the elsewhere, that became overarching in how Zimbabwe is understood. However, as I refer to in this discussion, understanding these dominant narratives on Zimbabwe, and the experiences of Zimbabweans in the elsewhere, also demands a sort of historiography that encompasses numerous complexities. These complexities inform and shape the experiences of Zimbabweans in Britain. The task here is of course not to embark on such a historiography. It is to acknowledge and refer to such a historiography and its possibilities for revealing aspects that may complement, exist as counter-narratives, enrich and do many other things to existing narratives. It is to work both within, and try at tearing and working outside, the non-linear time and temporal displacement of Zimbabweans, and the movement of music.

The lives of those who are displaced, dislocated, who have to relocate, those who are mobile, in instances where it seems there is choice, or there is not, in time and place, are already unstable in some ways, so my contribution might be more in connecting certain moment, kinds, experiences of instability in producing this work, rather than in me claiming to do the destabilisation itself. This is also to argue that the destabilisation that I am aiming at is of a hegemonic narrative, and to not romanticise the destabilisation, in lived and material terms.

De-reify, like demystify, is basically, following the other three I have looked at: continuing to embrace the multiplicity of narratives on Zimbabwe, on the lives of the other and the strange, whilst also questioning the authorial voices that make claims to knowing and (re)presenting. I am critical of my position not as a doubting of the experiences I have with other Zimbabweans, as Zimbabwean, but as an acknowledgement of their partiality, something I also reiterate in the course of this dialogue. It is not a dismissal of the authorial voices of the already multiple ways Zimbabwe has been written about. I perceive it as a desire to engage with, yet seeing outside and beyond the hegemony of the post-2000 moment and its binary politics. It is, as the other Ds, part of the effort at exorcising the stubborn and sometimes

belligerent apparitions of Zimbabwe as the post colony, characterised, especially in its politics, by what Achille Mbembe has called the obscene and grotesque (Mbembé, 2001).

My reference here to these Ds is also a nod to what I am calling the poverty of language, and how, within the confines of a time-bound project, the close attention to the grammars of translation and representation, which are in fact a lifetime's work, are not always possible in the conversation. Categories and identifications such as migrant, Zimbabwean, black, man and woman, for example are assumed to exist with shared meanings, and it is not every instance in this conversation one questions them, the way I explore the contestations around whether Zimbabweans as a wholly unified category of identification exist at all (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a). These grammars can mean many things, and not all of what they may mean to different interlocutors, as texts in themselves, can be encompassed here. Nevertheless, I hope that like the way we read signposts, when they are present, on paths; I use these words, this language, to point to a path towards some understanding(s) of the complexity of the experiences I relate herein.

Writing Zimbabwe, much like writing places and peoples tends to be (or rather as one expects and imagines has been), contentious, especially in the decade since the year 2000. The story, and ultimately multiple stories of Zimbabwe, and Zimbabwean bodies, and the mobilities thereof, have at moments been overshadowed by the dark clouds of political and economic decline, consequently producing narratives of abjection, and sometimes a concomitant, fairly simplified echo of the 'happy native', the resilient Zimbabwean body, victim of political persecution, migrant, recipient of sanctuary—this has simultaneously brought into relief the already present coloniality—of general existence and its materiality of certain dominant narratives, tying the migrant condition of the (black) Zimbabwean to the entrenched failures of a (black) government.[8] Amidst the flurry of analyses and prescription, one struggles to

[8] This is important to note because 'Zimbabwean' (which is hegemonically read as black or African) presence in Britain predates the attainment of official independence and existence of Zimbabwe as a state. As is shown in the narratives of some of the Zimbabweans in this work, many were leaving the Rhodesian state they regarded as racist, to be confronted with being black in Britain. One then has to be careful to not reduce "reasons" for migration to a simplistic reading that wedges into different larger historical and contemporaneous political agendas

locate oneself, in trying to explore what it means to be a black Zimbabwean body in the elsewhere; an elsewhere in which certain marked bodies already spell abjection whilst subject to (also as objects) the material consequences of such embodiment.

This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the conversation(s) on Zimbabwe by offering some vantage points of the (migrant) experience in London, without an overarching discourse and experience, neither of abjection or any linear understanding of 'being Zimbabwean'. At least that is the intention, yet one is also aware that in writing and argumentation, some strongly held positions assert themselves, and unwittingly, the desire and demand for some logical coherence and legibility impose themselves.

Zimbabweans in London live with music and experience music in contexts in which hypercapitalism, as I have alluded to in relation to knowledge production and circulation, dominates. Affect is thus not divorced from the kinds of greed, exhaustion and threats of and lived abjection, that come with incessant work, precarity and the migrant condition. This materiality is well expressed by Anderson when he argues that affective life is always-already mediated; emergent from specific material arrangements that may be composed of all manner of bits and pieces. The geographies of affect will be a function of the relational configurations that object-targets, bodily capacities or affective conditions are both a part of and emerge from (Anderson, 2014).

In addition to pointing to the materiality and importance of affect, explicitly considered or as an underlying yet integral component of musicking, this also suggests to us the possibilities that place and space contain, as metaphors and conceptual lenses through which we can further view the aforementioned complexities. As will be evident and elucidated further, aspects of affect, space and place, among others, recur throughout, particularly as efforts at unsettling sites of a sometimes-pernicious stability and fixity in articulating (black) Zimbabwean bodies and the dances they engage in place and space. Doreen Massey does this well in arguing against limited ways of conceptualising space and place, and the political orderings accompanying such (Massey, 1994). In engaging with the relationships intertwining musicking to home, place, space and belonging, I am here drawing from a wide, inter/transdisciplinary body of work. As an instantiation, this work

encompasses conceptualisations of 'homing desires', aesthetics and radical re-imaginings of (Zimbabwean) blackness, multiplicity of routes and roots, the refusal to be emplaced and re-imaginings of Zimbabwean pasts and futures, in and from the elsewhere as London, Britain (Brah, 2005; Clifford, 1993, 1994, 1997a; Gilroy, 2013; Hartman & Wilderson, 2003; Moten, 2003; Vera, 1992). In their different ways, these arguments will slither and slide through the discussion in slippery ways. Suffice to say, the hope is to provide space to unsettle being Zimbabwe(ean).

This pot of argumentation leaks. It will leak. It is meant to leak, not to contain observations and experience that defy containment. Those leaks can become opportunities for response, further inquiry, for growing more complexity. It is an acknowledgement, as I am bound to reiterate (a euphemism for the repetition) in the ensuing discussion, of the interstitial nature of the experiences encountered, and their translation into legible ethnography. The partial and lived way of conveying these experiences is also encapsulated by Sarah Ahmed who argues for writing away from the 'ontology of the stranger' towards the creation of multiple identifications through acts of remembering, sometimes in the absence of shared knowledge of a familiar terrain. My navigating of London with Zimbabweans echoes Ahmed's position that a consideration of the historical patterns of estrangement, in which the living and yet mediated relation between being, home and the world is partially, or even unalterably reconfigured from the perspective of those who have left home (Ahmed, 2000). The desire to write away from dominant narratives of strangeness is however met with the force with which these narratives are re-inscribed in Britain, inadvertently centering forms of sub/abjection that are not always in opposition to, but coexist with the conviviality of musicking.

Utilising musicking as a conceptual vehicle is thus not meant to convey any linear celebratory motif, or evidence of resistance, or that life, after all does go on. Life does go on, and the ethnographic moments that follow are all of these things enmeshed, a mash up that is constitutive of the various facets of being this thing, this body and relationship to ideas of nationhood and belonging, of being ensconced in history, and the present, coevally, as Zimbabwean. It constitutes an effort to grapple with the difficulties of being Zimbabwean, and researching oneself possibly as subject and object, whilst playing at the impossibility at objectifying the self, experience,

embodiment, affect and being, in legible ways. I provide an exploration of some of the positions I adopt and respond to, in asking why I use music as the vehicle of choice for exploring the complexities of Zimbabwean lives in Britain.

It also means that, though not an explicit theme and point of focus in this discussion, the violence that Ndlovu-Gatsheni recognises as becoming a central aspect of organising Zimbabweans into a collectivity continues to exist in time and space unbounded; in this elsewhere, as migrant existence, because of the material consequences of such categorisation, of having marked bodies, of existing on the outside of the inside, a sometimes fetishised margins, means such bodies experience various forms of violence, a tune to which they also dance (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a). Whether, in the Gramscian sense, by consent, or coercion. Here the important work on Zimbabweans in Britain by McGregor, Mbiba and Pasura for instance also finds expression., as it appears in other sections of this work (Mbiba, 2011; McGregor, 2008; Pasura, 2008).

The prominent discussions around Zimbabwe, especially Zimbabwean presence in Britain, have already been foregrounded by the events that have occurred in Zimbabwe in the past more than decade and a half, precisely after the year 2000. To this effect, I have started with the socio-political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe by answering questions such as: Why have Zimbabweans left and have continued to leave the country? What place has music had—and the converse (music in place, place in music)—historically and contemporaneously in the Zimbabwean socio-political landscape? The crisis, especially since the year 2000 and land reform, is foundational in informing the dominant understandings of Zimbabwean being. There is no available reliable sample for studying Zimbabweans in the UK. Estimates of figures that are thrown around make it difficult to have a general quantitative grasp of Zimbabwean presence. Studies and surveys conducted, as McGregor points out, in London, as well as other cities in the UK, have however shown the marked presence of Zimbabweans and their involvement in different aspects of life in Britain, especially their role in care work and in the National Health Service. The general demographics reveal that most migrants were born in Zimbabwe and moved to the UK because of the socio-political crisis. Initial migration has been characterised by Mbiba as middle class, because only people who could afford it could migrate across continents (Mbiba,

2012). This class-based form of migration to the UK corresponds with what Werbner has identified, about London as a gateway city, and the imagination and creation of an 'African' diaspora by an elite who are not bogged down by the kinds of precarious existence that moors those on the margins to those vary margins (Werbner, 2010).

An appreciation of the socio-political issues at hand has also rendered the historical relationship of Zimbabwe and Britain manifest. The colonial encounter thus deserves attention, not in the historically specific sense of the Pioneer Column and Cecil John Rhodes riding in their wagons into what is now Zimbabwe, or the settler colonial experience in itself. I am thinking here of the colonial encounter as an enduring moment, that carries itself, or rather, is carried, through to the present, both materially and in other discursive forms—especially in how it becomes instrumental in both the early and later mobilities of Zimbabweans to Britain in the 1970s and the anti/de-colonial movement, birthing decolonisation, as physical and conceptual promises. The colonial encounter as framed here assists understanding that Britain occupies a certain place and space in the socio-economic and political realities of Zimbabwe, as well as in the imaginary of both the fairly elite, and the precariat, informing the kinds of traces, of roots and routes, that shape being Zimbabwean in Britain (Clifford, 1997a). One could even suggest then, that the physical and geographical reality of Britain is already preceded by the imagined Britain, a Britain in space, a concoction that is a product of the colonial encounter, the aspirational, and of course the escape, the seeking of a respite from the malaise Zimbabwe finds itself in, in which Britain is already implicated. Claims to belonging and the instrumentalisation of Britain can also be traced in this colonial encounter, not necessarily 'to' this encounter as a point of origin. The experiences and transnational connections of people like Mudhara Wala, Fred Zindi, and many of the Zimbabweans I encountered and interacted with, who came to Britain in the '70s, make explicit the significance of these historical traces. The ironies and paradoxes of the colonial encounter and being Zimbabwean in Britain inundate many spaces, from the bar at Zimbabwe House I spent a lot of time in, Sanganai Bar, to the place of pride in many conversations and experiences that the idea of 'Britain' occupies.

The history of Zimbabwe's relationship to Britain, and the early, colonially informed mobilities assist frame a historical trajectory, and the generational possibilities

foregrounded by the stories and experiences of older Zimbabweans I have spent time with in London, as well as marking the temporal aspects of how relationships and music seep into each other, enmeshed in constituting the crucible in which some aspects of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere are taken. It also forms an important background to how Zimbabweans, in an emergent and reflexive way, become African and black in how they occupy, or are occupied by London, as space and place, and how different aspects of such identification are contingently emphasised.

Through discussion of episodes, moments, experiences in and of multiple sites conceptually relayed as musicking in the broader discussion, I trace and engage with the various complex aspects of bodies that have moved, or on the move, that, even though they are predominantly perceived as having crossed borders, live with these borders in their bodies, in practice, in how even musicking itself is policed and constrained. Music, in a sense, is the soundtrack to the conversations I engage, in what one Zimbabwean repeatedly called 'acoustic-mology' (and that has been called elsewhere acoustemology) his version of a certain epistemological frame of my work—that exists despite, in the afro-pessimist positionings of Wilderson and Sexton—'the black' being ontologically and epistemologically refused existence, or existing as the sub/non-human, even in the modes of black cultural expression that music and being Zimbabwean are implicated (Sexton, 2011; Wilderson III, 2008).

## Why Music?

There is a dearth of literature specific to the experiences of music and negotiating belonging amongst Zimbabweans in Britain. I take up musicking in London as an entry point into exploring the historical and present complexities of Zimbabwean existence in Britain. As is evident and reiterated, this conversation herein on Zimbabweans in London is not about music per se, but how music is a present and integral part of the migrant and diasporic experience, and features prominently in how belonging and being have been negotiated, and in (re)constructions of home, memory, and the navigations of place and space (Ramnarine, 2007). To privilege music here is not to focus on musicians per se, because not all migrants who move are musicians, but they engage with music, in different ways, and at different levels (Toynbee & Dueck, 2011). Impey, in her study linking music to environmental action, contends that music may operate as a discursive site where information about place and belonging is reflected upon and memorialised in symbolic form (Impey, 2006:93).

> It (music) expresses what may have been forgotten as a result of social change, and communicates concerns that may not be expressed verbally as a consequence of repressive social circumstances or cultural conventions. Music transmits experiences and provides a cognitive map of histories, people and places. While offering an immediate, embodied and highly adaptive expressive outlet for the negotiation of individual and social identities, it also preserves and sustains collective memories. In its many forms and manifestations, music functions as a primary symbolic landscape of a people.

Here Impey demonstrates the valence of music in intertwining the individual and the social. Music then becomes not just an avenue for performing the present, but for remembering, and reconstructing the past, as well-imagined futures. Frith buttresses this position, adding that in relation to music, identity is not necessarily a thing, but an experiential process that is most vividly grasped as music, because it offers both a sense of self and others, of the subjective in the collective (Frith, 1996).

Monson argues that the very idea of blackness was forged in a dialectic with white supremacy, so the very idea of a transnational or diasporic black music has been synthesised in opposition to racial subjugation (Monson, 2004). The excursion into black culture and black resistance in Britain through music by Gilroy provides such

an instance of a conceptual lens through which Zimbabwean migrant and diasporic narratives can be perceived (Gilroy, 1993a). Gilroy borrows what Zygmunt Bauman calls a counter-culture of modernity to examine the role of black musical expression as well as the shifting relationship of music making to other modes of black cultural expression. The political valence of the musical traditions of the black Atlantic is instanced by the cases of the visit of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, and of the song 'I'm So Proud', originally done by The Impressions, and popularised as a reggae song through remakes in Britain. Such a tracing of musical 'genealogies' to slavery, to Chicago, to Jamaica and the Caribbean by Gilroy is significant in how it points to the need to consider the historical elements of the narratives I seek to understand, as well as the possibilities of establishing such musical genealogies as well.

Dawson makes similarly useful conceptions in his discussion of Linton Kwesi Johnson's (LKJ's) dub poetry, and how his work when he had moved to Britain focused on issues critical to young black people born and living in Britain (Dawson, 2006). The song *Inglan is a Bitch* is an example of confronting the challenges of blackness in Britain. LKJ's work also remained steeped in transatlantic traditions, steeped in the development of his dub from Jamaica, as well as his involvement in the West Indian Community in Britain, as seen in his involvement with the Notting Hill Carnival. Carnival, as Dawson notes, took on a pivotal and symbolic space in representations of identity and community in Britain. Dawson (ibid: 56) adds, "Carnival is also one of the central rituals of geographically distant but culturally related African and South Asian diasporic populations, from Port of Spain to Rio, New York, Toronto, and London."

From a Caribbean background of confrontational cultural traditions in the elsewhere, infused with elements of class and race satire and subterfuge, the Carnival in Britain has been a crucial vehicle of channelling and (re)presenting cosmopolitanisms of Britain's diasporic populations. In addition, the Carnival, as Dawson elaborates, was, in the 1970s, a flashpoint over spatially embedded definitions of British National identity. In the way that the Carnival offers visible evidence of the transnational and postcolonial connections of Britain's diasporas, it is an important case for considering creative musical and artistic events as platforms for challenging and redefining spatial arrangements and limitations and producing and asserting identities.

I worked at the Notting Hill Carnival between 2013 and 2016 with a Zimbabwean family, and went to the Africa Centre for different events, before it moved from what was then it's location. Spaces such as the Africa Centre have, as Wala informed me, memories stuck to their walls, and the logic of capital has transformed these places, or made them unavailable to groups that previously used them as a rallying point. The Carnival has similarly changed in character and form.

**In my colourful apron making and selling food at the Notting Hill Carnival with Mudhara Wala at his stall**

Henceforth I will look at some of the various vantage points from which music, identity or belonging have been explored. Looking at some of the arguments on music as sociality and its place in the convergences of the private and public, the intimate and the collective, will buttress the conceptual and methodological, as well as theoretical efforts this discussion is making in (re)imagining Zimbabweans in Britain, and how they imagine themselves, through music and the lived and conceptual possibilities it provides for considering certain forms of migrant being. This reimagining is also why space and place occupy an integral part of the conversation, in a non-essentialist way that traverses the transnational and trans-local possibilities that come with being in and about a place such as London.

A lot of important work has been done on migrants, diasporas and music in Britain and elsewhere, and I draw from such works as part of providing a conceptual

mapping of the nexus I am engaging with. This work also demonstrates how the relationship of music to belonging and negotiating being, especially in Britain, is not exceptional to Zimbabweans, because as I show, in many ways they are as part of 'local and global', historical and contemporary factors that impinge on, and through which are (re)produced, strands of migrant experiences and identities. One can then see the merit in exploring the Zimbabwean experiences and narratives of the migration-music-identity nexus, considering that they exist in a Britain that already has historical antecedents of such transnational and diasporic imaginings, at the same time political, events.

In acknowledging the place music has in the lives of Zimbabweans, I concur with George, who, exploring music, ritual and gender in a hill society in South Sulawesi, Indonesia has argued that, "listening to people making music is a way to listen in on the making of social relationships. Music does not transcend the strains of social life, but as a set of practices tuned to and tuned by the flux and flow of human relationships, it is necessarily bound to them"(George, 1993:1).

In a commentary on a lifetime achievement award given to Zimbabwean musician Oliver Mtukudzi, a journalist had this to say about the musician and his relationship to the Zimbabwean diaspora, "With song and dance, he has nursed their weeping wounds of nostalgia and empathised with them over the painful realities of life in the diaspora[9]."

It is also apt here to recognise the arguments by Adorno, as articulated by De Nora who argues that music for Adorno is a dynamic, living medium, that he used to think with, and establishes a relationship between music and consciousness. For Adorno, art, music included, is a condition through which consciousness is structured in the modern world. Adorno bemourns the loss of dialectical tension in modernity, where music loses its status as a dialectical praxis and an instigator of critical consciousness, and is reduced to a commodity, a good in the hands of capitalism. Music, as part of a culture industry, becomes massified and standardised, lacking originality, and depth (DeNora, 2003). This comes through in the perceptions by some that Zimbabwean

[9] Chofamba Sithole, in a piece on the online Zimbabwe news site, NewZimbabwe.com

music in the diaspora loses its 'authenticity'. My interest is not necessarily aligned to a recognition of the commodification and massification of music, or in cognitive aspects, but rather the social and perceived aspects, which can be construed as cognitive only to the extent that participants express their thoughts and opinions, and that music comes to affect and be affected by dislocation and the mythic imaginings of home and diaspora (Brah, 2005; Gilroy, 1997)—but certainly not in any psychological sense. If music cannot speak for itself, but makes sense through the lens of social interpretation and intervention, then I am interested in 'consciousness' as it is constitutive of a sense of an awareness of being in or out of place, of relations and sociability, of the experience of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, mediated by music.

There can be no denying that, like many other aspects of contemporary life, music, or what is dominantly accepted as such, has become market-driven. I explore here what Zimbabweans moving within such contexts think of what music they are exposed to or choose, of musical performance and moment, and how music features in their inhabiting of place and place. As people move, they carry with them material and non-material aspects of their 'home' cultures, amongst these musical instruments, memorabilia and the music itself. Such cultural 'artefacts' have the potential to be platforms for the construction and negotiation of migrant identity, and a vehicle for refashioning and engaging with certain practices and experiences within a migrant context.

Blacking has argued that all music and music making, in the contexts of performance and of the ideas and skills of composers, performers and listeners, entails what they bring to what they define as musical situations (Blacking, 1991). Such musical situations, in a migrant context, may involve the re-interpretation and re-invention of music, or its reinforcement in ways that create or enable certain forms of being and (un)belonging. As James posits in her study on rural migrant women and music in urban South Africa, migrants create past and place—constructing and reinterpreting the significance of 'home', of the past and traditions and a new and relatively precarious space and place (James, 1999).

Music in migrant contexts sometimes changes to reflect new contexts, technologies, opportunities and performing situations, empowering migrant groups by "staking out a unique cultural space in the host nation . . . an entirely new space that asserts and affirms both aspects of their hyphenated identities" (Diethrich, 1999:36). There is no doubt that Zimbabwean migrants in the UK are confronted with new contexts, technologies and opportunities that enable, or constrain, the (re)negotiation of being and belonging. In this vein, being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, diaspora and transnationalism become, a utopian symbolic space, not a simple transcendence of the national, but rather an expressive project that samples and mixes the identities of immigrant, citizen and refugee, whilst also relating to, and involving those 'at home' (Stephens, 1998).

The recognition of music as being part of, and conveying cultural baggage signifies the social construction of musicality, or what has been referred by Small (Small, 1999, 2011) as musicking—and how musicking can be an important part of everyday life, of ritual, myth and art, as avenues for the construction of migrant being and of public images of sentiment. Blacking (1987:29) argues that, "as a metaphorical expression of feeling that is primarily sensous and nonreferential, music offers a representation of knowable facts, characteristic not of objective experience but of our consciousness and comprehension that music is affected by other channels of communication that accompanies it."

Ervine discusses how Zebda, a multiethnic French band, has engaged with issues of discrimination, racism and integration (Ervine, 2008). Three singing members born in France, of Algerian descent, and the other band members have Spanish or Italian origins. As a band composed of migrants, or people with migrant origins, they have a particular relationship to music, and in their lyrics and musical messages, the issues addressed speak to migrant experiences of place and space, locating musical performance and consumption as a critical element in articulating migrant experience.

Music plays an important role in the narrativisation of place, as argued by Whiteley et al, during recent decades, urban spaces in different parts of the world have become increasingly contested terrains, the contestation of space being facilitated

considerably through musical innovations and practices (Whiteley, Bennett, & Hawkins, 2004). In an always changing London, Zimbabweans have learnt to navigate space and place, and fit into what I regard to be the crevices and interstices of this elsewhere, and to be convivial in the face of abjection and precarity, with music mediating these relationships.

Connell and Gibson highlight an important issue on the aesthetics of exoticism in what has been called 'world music', which is against my position as a 'native anthropologist', a Zimbabwean migrant who is also living in London (J. Connell & Gibson, 2004). As I note elsewhere in the tensions of my insider/outsider positioning, I am neither interested in enclaves of authenticity or what remains traditional or exotic. Furthermore, as ethnography and not a study in ethnomusicology per se, my focus at this point is not only on particular genres that can be regarded as 'Zimbabwean', but on spaces and places and music produced by, listened to and performed by people who self-identify as Zimbabwean migrants in London. I am conscious of the possibilities of the fetishisation of marginality and place, of black Zimbabwean bodies negotiating belonging (Moten, 2003). My intent is certainly not to fetishise Zimbabweans, but to engage with the complexities, particularities and specificities of context. These complexities reveal how music, for Zimbabwean migrants, is part of forms of transnational social fields and circulations of culture

Linking music to the performance of everyday life and activity, that involves and invokes sentiment, an aspect that one cannot just perceive, lends usefulness, besides the 'participant observation', to the importance of narrative. This is particularly so as I delve into the ways in which music evokes ideas and memories of home, and the part it plays in nostalgia, affective elements that can be given life through the eyes of the Zimbabwean migrants themselves. One can then explore, for instance, how music establishes feelings of belonging, safety, community, in place and space.

Music, as performance, a vehicle, a platform, a process, as well as a product and commodity, among other things, also has the productive possibilities of mediating transnational relationships that can connect Zimbabwean migrants to each other, as well as to members of the wider Afro-Caribbean and other diasporas in Britain, in

trans-local ways. In addition, transnationality means migrants can engage with what are regarded as 'global' forms of musical production and consumption that are aligned to the aforementioned articulated modes of capital as well as cultural production. Lundberg identifies how forms of transnationality and translocality come to the fore of the internet and how media technologies are dissolving the boundaries of time and space (Lundberg, 2009). Lundberg reveals how Assyrians in Sweden have no concept of a 'homeland' to return to. Connections in musical production, performance and consumption manifest translocality as they involve a sense of concurrency between many different local groupings of actors. Musical local practices are thus found at the same time in different places. These Assyrian actors are perceived as having a feeling of being part a community through music. The notion of the 'Zimbabwean diaspora' is still developing as migrant Zimbabweans recognise themselves and each other, and their relationship to Zimbabwe. Media technologies have certainly brought forms of musical transnationality in ways that were obviously different before. The case of Assyrians in Sweden, however, also points to the peculiarities of each context, and is a constant reminder that, although I may draw from different examples in making the case for exploring the migration-music-identity-belonging nexus, the case of Zimbabweans in London is as similar as it is different, without having to make that special case for peculiarity.

Greve, working on Turkish migrants in Europe, highlights how in the 1970s, Turkish immigrants established music restaurants and Gazinos (night clubs)(Greve, 2009). As part of ritual, music remains a central part of Turkish weddings in Europe, and there are migrant associations offering lessons in folk music, dance and other forms of Turkish musical performance. Transnational connections are established as Turkish musicians, like the Zimbabwean musicians who tour in the UK and other countries from Zimbabwe, travel from Turkey to Europe to record music, as well as to perform. As a reaction to exclusion from musical institutions, Turkish musicians have opened several private and exclusively Turkish music schools in many European cities since the 1990s, especially in Germany. In Berlin alone there are seven private Turkish music schools. There is also one in Amsterdam and a smaller one in London. The Turkish community in Europe has also seen the adaptation of hip hop, exemplary of the change of identity discourse amongst youngsters with a migration background, akin to the urban groovers and Zimdancehall of Zimbabwean music, who are evidence

of generational changes in musical identity and performance when compared to older generation of Zimbabwean musicians such as Oliver Mtukudzi and Thomas Mapfumo.

Music for migrants can be a resource to articulate differences and claim subjectivities, expressing multiple modes of nostalgic emotions and constructing social spaces. Lu notes this in festival music practices of Chinese immigrants in Rangoon, Burma. Chinese immigrants engage in musical construction of Chinatown, and the existence of micro-musics within the Chinese community (Lu, 2011). This element of micro-musics is relevant to the heterogeneity of migrant populations, and the interchangeable use of music and musics, as awareness of plurality. Despite the absence of race, for instance, in the dominant narratives, Zimbabwean migrants are heterogenous across language, race, gender, among many other facets and can have micro-musics that are symbolic of the various differences across class, age, gender or ethnicity. The fractures of the Zimbabwean diaspora will be explored later in the conversation, and the different musical leanings are apparent in the preferences, especially when it comes to perceptions on secular and religious music.

Wade argues that music defines, represents, symbolises, expresses, constructs, mobilises, incites, controls, transforms, unites, and so much more (Wade, 2004). The inclusion of music, as an object/commodity, a vehicle for, and a site of negotiating being provides a useful alternate, and complement to the other areas that studies of migration, particularly contemporary Zimbabwean migration, have focused on.

Martin Stokes adds to the importance of considering the place of music/music and place by advancing that music is clearly very much a part of modern life and our understanding of it, articulating our knowledge of other peoples, places, times and things, and ourselves in relation to them (Stokes, 1994). The salience of music contemporaneously is also amplified by cosmopolitan and metropolitan existence, in which music becomes important in how we locate, and in the context of migrancy, relocate, ourselves. Stokes continues, emphasising that the places constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundaries. Music is socially meaningful, not entirely, but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries that separate them.

I agree, although I do not focus on ethnicity as Stokes (1994, 2004), that music, musical production and performance, as well as the acts of listening, dancing, arguing, discussing, thinking and writing music provide the means by which Zimbabwean migrant identities are (re)constructed and mobilised. As Shelemay posits, music travels geographically, linking soundscapes within and across isolated locales and large urban centres. Instruments that are markers of ethnic and national identity can attain even deeper associations as people move beyond the boundaries of their historical homelands (Shelemay et al., 2006).

Another instance of an attempt to understand music and migrancy is Bohlman's study of what is termed Klezmer, a particular type of Jewish music in Europe. This music is perceived by some as a symbol for healing the wounds left by the Holocaust—translating the Jewish into the global, reinstating and remembering the diaspora that also came to an end with the Holocaust (Bohlman, 2009). This is taking place in an era in which forms of identity have been made ephemeral and illusive through electronic transmission. Through the performance of this music, and its online presence, a duality appears, with the distinctiveness of Jewish culture and identity versus interaction with communities within which Jews in Europe exist. This culminates in musical geographies of in-betweenness, where music and musical performance can be forms of belonging and (un)belonging simultaneously. Bohlman's example provides an illustration of the complexities that I engage with, albeit in a different place and space, informed by different histories of Zimbabwean experiences in Britain, which are articulated through, and mediated by, music.

Andrew Leyshon et al, in arguing for a theorisation of music and place, put forward that the exchange of social and (sub-)cultural capital is important, not only in the making of music, but also in the consumption of music (Leyshon, Matless, & Revill, 1998). As well as providing an avenue for negotiating migrant identity, evoking memories of home, amongst other things, music can also become the site for the accumulation of certain forms of capital, and consequently the establishment, or reinforcement of certain migrant classifications, across class and gender, as well as ethnicity.

Another poignant example of music, place-making and identity negotiation is provided by Sarah Cohen who argues that the consumption and production of music also draws people together and symbolises their sense of collectivity and place (Cohen, 1993, 1995). Through, for instance, the story of a certain Jack Levy, Cohen exemplifies the social and cultural life of immigrant Jews in Brownlow Hill, Liverpool, and how religious music and practice helped maintain their individual and collective identity in a context of considerable uncertainty and unfamiliarity. Cohen cements her point by adding that the musical practices and interactions of the immigrant Jews helped to define and shape the particular geographical and material space within the city that they inhabited. As Jazeel adds, the analysis of music in the social sciences raises inherently geographical questions, particularly around how musical practice carves spaces of performance, expression and culture, and how it shapes social spaces of identity, belonging and community (Jazeel, 2005).

In a study of Rock Music and Place in Brasília, Brazil, Wheeler dissects the relationship between rock music and the spatial, architectural and other attendant elements of the city. It is important to understand how bands, and equally, audiences, perceive place and space, utilise places as well as express perceptions of physical and structural exclusion or inclusion. The transnational nature of the music itself speaks to the spaces and places occupied beyond those which the music is produced or performed. Wheeler recognises the mutually constitutive dynamic and dialogical nature of the relationship between music and place (space), an aspect also important in understanding Zimbabweans in London (Wheeler, 2012).

Music can reflect aspects of the place it is created and performed in, but it similarly and simultaneously produces and is produced by and through space. This is evident, especially in the gendered nature of (re)negotiating being amongst Zimbabwean migrants. How does musicking reflect, or create certain conceptions of gender and sexuality? Armstead (2007) offers a useful instance, of a Cuban rap female trio, Las Krudas, who transcend the disciplined spaces of the tourist gaze, as well as hegemonic constructions of black female identity and sexuality. In a musical genre that has been dominantly male, Las Krudas, as Armstead argues, demand moving beyond Foucauldian notions of discipline and panopticism, as they assert a transnational

black diasporic identity, as well as resisting discipline through musical and theatrical performance, as both black and female.

This is an effort at exploring the multiple binds of dislocation, where Wala, for instance, ran the Limpopo Club[10] for years at the Africa Centre, and has had to navigate an increasingly hostile and competitive musical space, in which a certain commercial logic predominates. These changes are what, according to the older Zimbabweans, have established Sanganai as an important rallying place, as previous place Zimbabweans would historically met have changed use, or been sold to the highest bidder. In many other ways, these changes reveal the changes in the demographics of Zimbabweans in Britain, as well the nature of the politic. Now when one thinks of a regular place they find Zimbabweans, besides Sanganai Bar, it is just outside Zimbabwe House[11], where a group of 'exiled' Zimbabweans sing and dance each weekend at the Zimbabwe Vigil, as a demonstration against Robert Mugabe, ZANU (PF) and human rights abuses, whilst also performing their precarity as a way of possibly legitimating asylum claims, existence and belonging and Britain. Sometimes it seems to invite a caricature of itself, and the bodies involved, in this performance of migrant precarity and the search for acceptance and belonging. It becomes a reminder, to borrow Achille Mbembe's words from his exploration of performance and aesthetics in Congolese music , that even as one searches for the variations of the beautiful, in musicking amongst Zimbabweans, abjection is always peeping, sneering, and ready to pounce (Mbembe, 2005).

Another variant of exploring belonging and identity that I pursue is the central role that religion and religious music plays in the lives of Zimbabweans in Britain. Religion has been perceived as an anchor in times of precarity, recreating a sense of community, the 'Durkhemian' collective solidarity. Harris, who coincidentally was also based in Stoke Newington for fieldwork, for example, offers a historical trajectory of the presence of the Yoruba Church in London, focusing on the experiences of what they call 'spiritual power'. It is noted that, in attempting to study the church, the field was confronted with several challenges, especially because they were faced with a

[10] The Limpopo Club is an organisation Wala formed with friends to host music nights at the Africa Centre and promote African music in Britain. I discuss Limpopo Club later in the work.
[11] The Zimbabwean Embassy, which used to be Rhodesia House before independence

scattered, unbounded community in a large city (London) with no focus apart from intermittent meetings and services, and a web of personal relationships (Harris, 2006).

Developing this from the argument on piety and salvation and the gendered nature of religious performances, I focus on the experiences of gospel music, the choir at a congregation of Zimbabwean Catholic in Stoke Newington that I attended every other month.

I also extend this to some of the experiences of a friend, Catherine, who has tried her hand at performing gospel music, and was a keen in introducing me to the different kinds of Zimbabwean and other forms of gospel music. I attended over a month of 'Soul Food' with her at a Catholic church near Warren Street and Tottenham Court Road, and listened to some of the music she made.

The rise of the gospel collective, a mimicry of American Pentecostal choirs and musical collectives, has also seen several Zimbabwean bands touring the UK. This music locates itself as part of the transnational circulation of Zimbabwean music as these bands tour different countries, as well as inserting the Zimbabwean diaspora into a religious cosmopolitanism in which the bands can do renditions of songs of Hillsong, and other religious groups.

The convergence of these gospel troupes, millennial capitalism and the gospel of prosperity and the experience of dislocation reveals the desire for an anchor, which is found in this case in religion, and the possibility of a promised land, or at least a heaven if the material desires of the present, or imagined future are no met in his life, then in death, and the next.

## History Will Break Your Heart; Not in a Thousand Years[12]

Having looked at the general framing of this study around music and Zimbabwean presence in Britain, this background locates the search for the elsewhere, an escape, and the accompanying forms of mobility, as part of (though not necessarily originating from) the socioeconomic and political crisis that has riddled Zimbabwe for close to two decades now. The intertwined nature of the social, political and economic problems faced by Zimbabwe has seen many of its citizens crossing borders for multiple reasons attendant to this crisis. Consequently, the emergence of diasporic identities and claims is intimately connected to the Zimbabwean context (McGregor & Primorac, 2010).

I engage here with the factors that have shaped the predominant conversation around Zimbabwean migration, especially post-2000. I trace a historical path that emanates from the (end of) Zimbabwe's colonial relationship to Britain, through the conditions in Zimbabwe that create emigration, to sketching the place of music in Zimbabwe and consequently its routes that shaped how Zimbabweans take to musicking in this elsewhere. It is the situation in Zimbabwe that, to paraphrase Saidiya Hartman, creates scenes of abjection (Hartman, 1997) and is a forerunner to the conditions that link abjection at home and the elsewhere, for dislocation and the exodus of many Zimbabweans to Britain.

I reiterate here that it is also pivotal following this to look at the socio-political and economic situation that has obtained in Zimbabwe, and examples of the place of music there, because Zimbabwe becomes constitutive of the Zimbabwean identity, and the negotiation of being and belonging and reconstructions of home, memory, place and space revolve around the idea of Zimbabwe. Even in the mythical constructions that exist across generations, the forms of identification as Zimbabwean, and the musical

[12] In his racist and misguided refusal of the possibilities of black majority rule and the end of settler colonial regime, then Rhodesian prime minister Ian Smith said that black people would never rule, not in a thousand years. It was also in this context that the 'mother country', Britain, was seen being at loggerheads with the Rhodesian regime as what then passed for decolonisation had already been underway in other parts of Africa. History Will Break Your Heart is an exhibition by South African artist Kemang Wa Lehulere, that explores aspects of black being in South Africa, as an attempt to recoup the past in order to engage with the present. I use here the title of his exhibition juxtaposed with the statement by Ian Smith as a reiteration of the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe-Britain nexus—the messiness of history and the present in their ironies, and the sense-making struggles that seek the linear and logical narratives producing versions of hegemony and truth.

performances and spaces, and relationships to music as sociality are shaped by the Zimbabwe imagined at the point of departure, and in the present. Those who left Rhodesia, like Wala, relate in generative ways to a particular diaspora politics shaped by the temporal and spatial dynamics of the moments of their mobility and 'settlement' in Britain. On the other end, those like Catherine who left the Zimbabwe characterised by the challenges I refer to below negotiate being Zimbabwean with an imaginary of home that is different. The convergences and divergences emanating from these generational disparities, to be later explored in this discussion, find expression in what has happened in Zimbabwe and the representations of Zimbabwe that have been dominant. After all, Zimbabwe as the 'unifying' identification exists as a place of 'origin', and an anchor for the individual and collective representations that accompany it.

Like many other former 'colonial subjects' in the way Brah characterises them, Zimbabwean presence in Britain dates back to Rhodesian times. Colonial rule, especially during the liberation struggle and war that led to independence in 1980, pushed many black, and white Zimbabweans (then Rhodesians) out of the country to other places, including Britain (Brah, 2005).

The transition into Zimbabwe, from colonial Rhodesia, witnessed the departure of many white Zimbabweans—especially for South Africa—some coming to Britain. Rhodesia had already pushed many black bodies into the elsewhere of exile, with many coming to London as refugees and students. Amongst those to leave Rhodesia before it became Zimbabwe are those who became steady and helpful friends, interlocutors, elders and allies in my journey, ethnographic and existential, such as Mudhara Wala, among others. It is apparent here, as is elsewhere, that my access, and experience, was mediated by what could be regarded as masculinised occupation of place and space, especially in how I navigated London.

To many of those who came to Britain when Zimbabwe was still Rhodesia, like Wala, and those who arrived afterwards, the idea of 'Rhodesians Never Die', the title of the book by Peter Godwin and Ian Hancock (Godwin & Hancock, 1993), was the subject of both ridicule and intense conversation. In the mould of what I am referring to as the enduring colonial encounter in this discussion, the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe-Britain

nexus remains muddled and contentious, being both the product and consequence, and one of the sources of the understandings of being Zimbabwe(an) as the bounded territory, as well as the bodies that occupy the elsewhere.

To make a point in the mapping of anthropological (colonial) imagination and logic, geography, bordering and the attendant gaze: Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located to the north of South Africa, across the Limpopo River, with a last estimated population of between 12.6 and 15 million. Many have left, being the subject of this discussion. I am locating it here in relation to South Africa as part of my migratory journey and the imagination of transnational connections that Zimbabweans have established historically and in recent years (Crush & Tevera, 2010). The country, as already pointed out, attained independence in 1980, inheriting a strong currency and a fairly thriving, though skewed, economy and agricultural system, that served a white minority predominantly. The young Zimbabwe was, it has been argued, was viewed and referred to, in what has become an urban legend in Zimbabwe, by Julius Nyerere as the emerging 'jewel' of Africa, set up for future growth and success. The ZANU party that took over from the colonial administration started off on a reconciliatory tone, with the then Prime Minister Robert Gabriel Mugabe saying that Zimbabwe belonged to all who lived in it, and that it was important to put the acrimonious past behind.

Despite the euphoria and optimism that characterised the early independence years, the 1980s had already started manifesting problems in Zimbabwe's political landscape. There were early signs of decadence and autocracy. For instance, the Matebeleland region witnessed atrocities that have been equated with genocide, where most Ndebele 'dissidents', which unfortunately also included innocent civilians, were massacred in quelling what was regarded as a civil and military rebellion (Sithole, 1997). These atrocities continue to shape the Zimbabwean political landscape today, and find one frequently being asked whether they are Shona and Ndebele in the elsewhere. This became significant in the context of xenophobia and violence in South Africa, where language was a factor, and those who spoke Shona were supposedly easily identifiable. I also had to field questions on whether ethnicity in those terms was part of my work. Admittedly, I did not seek to explore the fractures of Zimbabwean identity in the elsewhere on the basis of whether people were Ndebele or Shona, choosing instead to focus on hierarchies produced in interactions

and performances, in gendered and classed ways, as well as, at the end of this work, on whiteness as an absence, to instance the ways in which narrativization of the elsewhere can be both illuminating and obscuring.

In addition to the Matebeleland atrocities, allegations of widespread corruption were already rife, with the 'Willowgate' scandal being one of the most prominent cases of the 1980s. Sachikonye notes that the scandal involved cabinet ministers in Zimbabwe implicated in the misuse of office by acquiring cars, which were then sold at higher prices (Sachikonye, 1989). It was an epitome and the embryonic origins of a fledgling political entity, and an indication of the monster that the 'revolutionary' and 'socialist' political machine was turning into. The Willowgate scandal also saw the spawning of repression of the media, and Geoffrey Nyarota, who at that time was editor of the newspaper that broke the Willowgate scandal*, The Chronicle,* and his deputy editor were fired. The posts were shifted, ostensibly to remove some dissenters and accommodate those more sympathetic to the regime (Chuma, 2005; Moyo, 2005; Sachikonye, 1989). These instances are highlighted as some of the early expressions of post-independence decline in Zimbabwe, which eventuated in the post-2000 socio-political and economic crisis.

Neopatrimonialism and blatant corruption seemed to be entrenched into the 1990s, as the bourgeois nationalist elite concretised its position and sought to cultivate loyalties amongst 'comrades'. Michael Bratton and Nicolas Van de Walle describe neopatrimonialism as consisting of relationships of loyalty and dependence that pervade a formal political and administrative system, in which leaders occupy bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994). Einar Braathen compared the telecommunications sectors in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and concluded that neopatrimonialism in Zimbabwean institutions had hampered technological development (Braathen, 2004). State resources were in many other ways channelled for entrenching patron-client relations that developed in bureaucratic organisations (Cheater, 1991). This compounded state bureaucratic inefficiencies and set the foundation for the collapse of parastatals and basic service delivery.

Terrence Kairiza argues that the year 1997 saw what has been dubbed 'Black Friday', where the Zimbabwean dollar fell drastically on the money market against the US dollar. Among the factors that contributed to precipitate the economic crisis were the huge payouts made by the Zimbabwean government to war veterans, a decision regarded as more political than economic, though the consequences encompassed both areas (Kairiza, 2009). A Zimbabwean army contingent was also sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that same year, another decision widely regarded in the same manner as the payouts to 'war veterans'. It has also been noted how this excursion into the DRC meant a diversion of much needed fuel and foreign exchange, precipitating the economic decline that had already begun in Zimbabwe (Nest, 2001; Power, 2003).

The following two years saw an escalation in popular disenchantment with ZANU (PF), culminating in food riots, and the consequent formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 out of a trade union movement, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), led by former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai (Chattopadhyay, 2000; Sachikonye, 2002).

Exactly twenty years after independence, the country found itself in the midst of a crisis fomented by the forcible removal of white farmers in what was termed the Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme. Alois Mlambo, Maurice Vambe and Abebe Zegeye note that starting in 2000 Zimbabwe plunged into deeper crisis when the government embarked on the accelerated land reform programme. This created space for politicised, nationalistic contestations over land, to the extent that virtually all aspects of Zimbabwean life were affected (Mlambo, Vambe, & Zegeye, 2010).

Farms that were predominantly owned by white farmers were appropriated without compensation. Sachikonye acknowledges that elements of orchestration, coercion and violence were present in the initial phases of the 'programme' (Sachikonye, 2003). The discourse around land invasions, occupations and redistributions ushered Zimbabwe into a state of soured relations with the 'West', particularly Britain, culminating in what Harare has termed 'a regime of sanctions' imposed on the country, restricting movement of certain political figures, and apparently negatively impacting on the volume of trade and investment, and of aid given to Zimbabwe.

'Sanctions' have been viewed differently, with certain quarters claiming that their effects have been limited as they are targeted, and others arguing that sanctions have worsened the crisis. Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros looking at land reform and its relationship to a global imperialism, are of the view that the effects of political and economic sanctions alone, both formal and informal, have been grave. They note how the United States of America passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Recovery Act, which opposed lending and debt cancellation to Zimbabwe. Combined with European Union sanctions, a negative image of Zimbabwe has predominated and, as noted above, aid and investment have plummeted (Moyo & Yeros, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b).

Zimbabwe did not improve politically, notwithstanding that for the first time since independence; ZANU (PF) lost its parliamentary majority in the general elections in 2000 to the MDC, sending shockwaves through the country's political landscape. A party that was credited with ushering Zimbabwe into the independence era was on the brink of redundancy, and faced defeat in the presidential elections that were to follow in 2002. Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous commented that the internal political climate turned hostile, with the party that had ruled Zimbabwe since independence, Zanu (PF), and its President Robert Mugabe, facing the prospects of loss of power. Political hostilities engendered violence and victimisation, entrenched patron-client relations, and led to further socio-economic demise (Phimister & Raftopoulos, 2007).

Chartuvedi observes that in 2002, pre-election violence erupted in the form of beatings, property damage and intimidation around the country (Chaturvedi, 2005). In a manner, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni has argued, violence was at the centre of statecraft (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a). The Prime Minister in the government of national unity, Morgan Tsvangirai, wrote in 2003 that the militarisation of politics was now complete, and any pretence to democratic politics had been effectively subverted through systematic state sponsored violence. Alexander and Tendi, in their discussion of the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe and their aftermath, show the importance that violence played in attempts to gain or maintain power, especially with members of

the opposition being targets for harassment and victimisation (Alexander & Tendi, 2008).

An onslaught on opposition supporters and politicians followed as ZANU (PF) tried to retain the power that was slipping out of its hands. Widespread violence was reported, and people were internally displaced as they moved away from the "hot" regions where the violence and intimidation were most rife. This has been described by Phimister and Raftopoulos as the pervasive violence of the Zimbabwean state, characterised by coercion and the suppression of dissent (Raftopoulos & Phimister, 2004).

Confronted with such violence, most political activists belonging to the opposition and civil society were forced to go into hiding or to flee the country, fearing for their lives. Young people were at the epicentre of the violence, both as victims and perpetrators on both sides of the political divide, resulting in them joining the train of departures coerced by the militarised political climate. The political hostilities constituted threats to the lives of activists, non-activists and their families, which was sufficient motivation for mass migration.

The Solidarity Peace Trust (2008) provides statistics regarding the victims of political violence, emphasising the position that young people occupied. The demographics offered by the Trust suggest that much of the violence was targeted. The bulk of those who were victimised (86%) were of productive age. This age group is also the most politically active.

The younger people are, the more likely they are to support the opposition: people under the age of 35 have no lived experience of the liberation war, and therefore are less persuaded by the rhetoric of ZANU PF. They have spent most of their adulthood in a nation that is deteriorating on every parameter. The vast majority of this age group has no formal employment and no possibility of obtaining employment, and has been the group most easily won over by the opposition (Solidarity Peace Trust, May 2008). I thought it important to include some of these figures as a way of expressing the generational possibilities this then produces. The generation of Wala that left Rhodesia under very different circumstances to that of those who came to

Britain post-2000 means that the versions of Zimbabwe they reconstruct are bound to differ in some respects, and that the way belonging and identity are renegotiated brings into relief the complex ways that home is imagined.

As recently as July 2010, the International Criminal Court was being encouraged to carry out investigations into the allegations of systematic rape by youth militia on opposition female supporters (Newsday, 21 July 2010). It is against such a political context that young Zimbabweans, among a whole group of Zimbabweans across class, gender, political affiliation and other factors, left for the now diaspora, to try living the life the Zimbabwean environment was increasingly failing to offer. The elsewhere offered the promise of safety from the violence and victimisation that many young Zimbabweans faced in Zimbabwe. Whether the promise is realised or not depends on their positionality and other uncertainties that the migratory landscape is fraught with, Britain included.

The political and economic elements in Zimbabwe during the period combined to carve unpleasant economic realities for Zimbabweans. Patrick Bond argues that Zimbabwe's economic demise cannot be attributed to any simplistic, unilinear causal factors, and he traces the economic problems from the time of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1990s to The Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono's failed policies, to the rampant corruption and abuse of state resources. None of these alone, but all of them combined, can be deemed responsible for the economic problems Zimbabwe is facing (Bond, 2007) .

Zimbabwe post-2000, until at least the formation of a unity government in 2009 between ZANU (PF) and the MDC after disputed 2008 elections, and the adoption of a multi-currency system, witnessed one of the worst hyperinflationary economies in the world, printing notes valued at trillions that could not buy a loaf of bread. The last exchange rate before the Zimbabwean dollar was disbanded equated one US dollar to trillions of Zimbabwean dollars. The economy was on a freefall for at least 10 years, starting at the time of the land redistribution in 2000.

Sachikonye highlights that from constituting 40% of the population in 1990, the proportion of Zimbabweans living below the poverty line had significantly increased

to over 75% in 1999 (Sachikonye, 2002). Gross economic mismanagement, accompanied by the neo-patrimonial relations already highlighted, spawned a troubled economy that ensured that most Zimbabweans could not access basic goods, such as bread, sugar or milk. The scarcity of food and other basics in the shops meant that even those with the money had to obtain the goods from elsewhere, accelerating the rate of cross border movements and trade (Muzvidziwa, 2001; Zinyama, 2000).

The banking system also suffered, as the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe closed banks that were regarded as engaging in financial malpractice, folding the banks together with people's funds (Hanke, 2008). The hyperinflationary environment was also fuelled by the Reserve Bank's practice of printing more money to offset losses in the value of the currency, yet shortages continued. Perpetual cash shortages meant that people could not access their funds. By the time they could, they would be eroded due to the hyperinflationary environment. Reports highlight how some suffered in queues for cash, and newspapers mention how others lost relatives and friends who had needed medical care and attention because they could not access their cash (Makochekanwa, 2009). The collapse of the formal economic system also gave birth to a thriving parallel market for cash, local and foreign currency and for even the basic necessities such as bread, milk, sugar and fuel. With exorbitant prices, this black market exacerbated hunger and poverty, whilst enriching the few who had access to the necessities (Mawowa & Matongo, 2010).

The value of foreign currency on the black market became an allure to leave the country and send remittances back home, which could then be used to buy local currency. It must be noted however that the economic situation had relatively stabilised since the introduction of a multicurrency system that had brought in new dynamics within the economy, until the 2016 introduction of a controversial 'bondnote' against the background of cash shortages and a struggling again economy. These economic and political uncertainties are expected to put more demands on the Zimbabwean diaspora that already contributes a lot in remittances, and to force many in Zimbabwe to consider leaving as well.

The collapsed economy was also accompanied by restricted media space. Although characterised by a repressive media environment, as symbolised by the Access to

Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Mbanga, 2008; Mukasa, 2003), some Zimbabweans had and still have access to global images of the elsewhere, especially with the rise in free ownership of satellite dishes to air television. The discrepancy between the realities presented in the media from other countries and the dire realities that Zimbabweans face in this economic quagmire continue to breed immense dissatisfaction and a desire to leave the country for supposedly better opportunities.

In a report for the Forced Migration Studies Programme on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa, Kiwanuka and Monson argue that migration emerged for many as the only solution to an economic situation that has depleted access to an increasing number of basic human rights, in many cases threatening the very survival of migrants and their families (Kiwanuka & Monson, 2009). Migration represented, and continues to represent, a respite from the economic problems Zimbabwe presents, whilst also offering spaces for re-establishing home and conviviality, for achieving the dignity and (material) success of which Zimbabwe has been deprived. Leaving Zimbabwe became and remains in many ways a survival strategy; an avenue to inhabiting foreign spaces and the sanctuary they are imagined to offer.

Zimbabweans have left en masse, because they have been deprived of many basic necessities, material and non-material. They have sought better enterprise and a more economically stable and reasonably predictable environment. James Muzondidya observes that post-2000, many Zimbabweans have been forced to leave the country because their livelihoods were destroyed or threatened by the deteriorating economic and social conditions (Muzondidya, 2010). Miriam Grant, in her study of urban youth in Bulawayo, noted that they were struggling to gain independence and productive adulthood in an environment characterised by extreme unemployment, runaway inflation, drought, food shortages, political instability and growing personal insecurity. This situation in which the Zimbabwean youth, as many others found themselves, plays a crucial role in determining migratory patterns (Grant, 2003).

Basic services such as water, health, education, transport, and many other social services were affected, as political players tussled and the economy tumbled at the

hands of local mismanagement and misappropriation. The education sector has suffered as teachers and lecturers have left for other countries throughout Southern Africa and other parts of the world, threatening Zimbabwe's high literacy rate and students' futures. There have been cases of constant job actions and serious absenteeism as people focus on survival strategies. Tapiwa Chagonda argues that since the year 2000, over 45,000 teachers have quit the profession and sought better fortunes in the diaspora. Consequently, particularly in tertiary education, Zimbabweans have left the country to pursue their higher education in countries they regard as having better educational resources and standards (Chagonda, 2010; Mpondi, 2009). This has resulted in a huge contingent of Zimbabwean students in South African universities, for example, contributing to the Zimbabwean presence in South Africa. Tara Polzer mentions that it is estimated that the number of Zimbabweans in South Africa ranges from one million to five million, varying greatly because of undocumented migrants (Polzer, 2008). Among these are many teachers, academic and students. Similarly, a lot of Zimbabweans are to be found in UK universities, both as staff and students. At this level, opportunity, socio-economic class and the knowledge economy seem to have a large part in shaping the mobilities of those who already had, or seek to pursue higher education credentials. I would regard myself as also sliding in and out of these spaces, as a member of what Guy Standing describes as the precariat (Standing, 2012).

Human capital flight has also extended to the health sector. Kapp, for instance, notes the continued deterioration of the Zimbabwean health system, where doctors and nurses continue leaving for better working conditions abroad (Kapp, 2009). Chikanda supports this view, pointing out that health workers have suffered poor job satisfaction, low morale, and poor salaries, resulting in the medical brain drain that has crippled the health sector (Chikanda, 2006). Add to this a general lack of medicines and health infrastructure, and one may say that the healthcare system is itself in an intensive care unit.

In addition to the health crisis, in the 1990s, urban spaces in Zimbabwe became increasingly precarious, and have only experienced limited relief since the inception of the shaky government of national unity in 2009. Urban areas, being sites of strong opposition to the government, have been subject to repression and have witnessed

acts of aggression by the state such as Operation Murambatsvina (Morreira, 2010). This operation saw the demolition of houses that were deemed by the government as unfit for human habitation, leaving many homeless and debilitating sources of income and survival strategies for many urban dwellers. Amanda Hammar explores the manner in which violent displacement has been implicated in, and produced by, assertions of sovereignty and processes of state-making in post-independence Zimbabwe. She gives Operation Murambatsvina as an example of state-induced, deliberate displacement (Hammar, 2008). In buttressing the precarious nature of urban spaces, Morreira (ibid) presents an argument about the transformation of urban socio-scapes in Harare, which has led to disillusionment with urbanity and modernity and which has also sparked migration to South Africa. Mobility is viewed as a means of escaping both the physical and symbolic uncertainties of Zimbabwean urban life.

Morreira perceives the Zimbabwean urban area as a site of structural violence by the state in a failing economy, a view also held by Terrence Ranger , who recognises the major urban crisis in Zimbabwe in failures in the provision of water, electricity and medicine, among many other factors. Importantly, Ranger also traces the crisis in Zimbabwean cities to the history of coloniality, and the legacies thereof (T. O. Ranger, 2007). Operation Murambatsvina, the demolition of people's houses, was largely seen as a way of pushing opposition supporters out of urban areas engendered by poverty and dispossession, leaving people without even the informal avenues for survival that they had established, and generating more fear and resentment of the state (Bracking, 2005; Potts, 2006). Here, the sort of precarious cosmopolitanisms that abound in Zimbabwe can be gleaned, yet the elsewhere itself, London for instance, is not itself free of precarity.

Raftoplous argues that from its inception, the political opposition in Zimbabwe made urban areas its major focus (Raftopoulos, 2006). Urbanity in Zimbabwe no longer holds the potential for progress, hence the need for innovation and mobility. This mobility, however, can no longer be just internal, such as rural-urban, or in the form of return internal migration, as none of the spaces in Zimbabwe provide the sanctuary needed. The nature of mobility thus becomes transboundary and transnational, as

people risk all to escape deprivation, and reach out for what they may regard as some form of salvation through migration.

Coltart, a former Rhodesian conscript, who was in government as an opposition official for a while, forwards that the human cost of the Zimbabwean crisis has been catastrophic, with over an estimated three million Zimbabweans fleeing to South Africa alone, and thousands more to the UK (Coltart, 2008). Since the inception of the unity government in 2009, there were expectations that there will be changes in migratory patterns, but as the situation in Zimbabwe remains unstable, neither certain nor predictable, to date there has not been enough incentive to motivate return migration.

What I have tried to do in this section is provide what can be called, in the mould of traditional migration scholarship, the push factors why Zimbabweans have been 'dispersed', to become an emergent diaspora. Together with these factors, I have made reference to the historical relationship that, at least in the bounded imaginaries of geography, statehood and contemporary mobilities, finds parts of its originary in the then Rhodesia, leading to what I have been calling the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe-Britain nexus. Understanding the Zimbabwean context is a useful framing of the kinds of abjection that then tend to dominate the conversation on Zimbabwean migration post-2000.

Music in Zimbabwe, which I now turn to, remains more than a soundtrack. It is part of the milieu that generates the kinds of movements eventuating in both the hegemonic, and this conversation on bodies that identify or are identified as Zimbabwean in London and Britain.

## Harare North: Singing the Blues in Zimbabwe and its Elsewheres

My own journey, from which the impetus to engage with Zimbabwean mobilities is drawn, took me across the border from Zimbabwe to South Africa, where many Zimbabweans have tried to find some sanctuary, even as they are confronted with xenophobic violence and the intricacies of a society in transition, post-apartheid South Africa, grappling with race, inequality and nationhood. The elsewhere has thus not just been a place of supposed sanctuary from the politics of Zimbabwe, but

a space with its own politics, the remnants or reproductions of Zimbabwe, and the particularities found therein.

*Aiva madziva ava mazambuko* is a Shona proverb which loosely translates to describe change and loss. It usually functions as an idiomatic expression, a metaphor for being deserted by fortune, and is allied here, in imagining the intricacies of the desire to be elsewhere, as metaphor and imagery, with Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* where the nameless protagonist (important here because even though this man, and many other migrants have names, and whatever claims to specificity and peculiarity are made, the tendency, however despondent this may sound, is to end up with such names swallowed into generalised categories, unnamed names, a folly to which, by virtue of functioning within the available language of category and concept, I am not immured from) has left Zimbabwe because of the socio-economic and political crisis, and experiences varying forms and levels of abjection in Britain, in sometimes sad, sometimes humorous ways.

It is the power of this fiction to make one laugh at abjection and precarity, and the forms of sociality entwined therein, in ways that alert us to both the ludicrousness and porosity of the 'human' when it comes to engaging with the figure of the migrant. It also reveals, in my reading, the complications of Zimbabwean presence in London, which cannot be reduced to the polarity present in the politics. I find this useful as a way of imagining Zimbabwean migration to Britain before and after 2000 and the kinds of politics of being and belonging that accompany it. Precarity pushes Zimbabweans towards Britain, yet it also sticks, smears and pervades this elsewhere, which has, as it appears, never been, like many places, habitable as a sanctuary in any complete way, especially to those that embody an alterity that has historically perforated the always weak foundations of a largely 'Western' humanism.

These songs of migration are then as beautiful as they are discordant, enmeshed in and enmeshing my experience, and those of bodies that move in this Fanonian zone of non-being, spaces of blackening and blackness (Gordon, 2005)—bodies and spaces that claim, and are also claimed as human, that perform their being in and out of place in messy ways, in sometimes coherent ones, at least as far as the ordering

and disciplining eye of seeking chronology here can see. Turino has noted that before independence, especially in the moments leading to mass cultural nationalism, leisure activities such as music and dance were not incidental to the serious political and economic struggles that were taking place in Zimbabwe. Precisely, they were significant public sites for the construction of a middle-class cosmopolitan identity basic to the emergence of African nationalism. Initiated and influenced through the colonial institutions of the mission church and military bands, cosmopolitan styles and repertoires of music, particularly jazz, ensued, which entangled North American Jazz diffused to Zimbabwe through South Africa. August Musarurwa, who performed the song 'Skokiaan', had left the Police Band in 1947 to form the Cold Storage Band and later the Sweet Rhythm Band in Bulawayo. His music was highly influenced by the South African version of jazz, *tsaba-tsaba* (Turino, Zeleza, & Veney, 2003). 'Skokiaan' was later adopted by South African groups, and by Louis Armstrong as 'Happy Africa', among other cosmopolitan groups. Already one begins to see the formations of complex musicking that both responds to the realities of the colonial and inserts itself into transnational circulations of music cultures. It is this style of 'townships music' that finds its way into *shebeens* and taverns, and eventually the clubs of London amongst Zimbabweans in the elsewhere.

Music has characterised certain transitions in Zimbabwe, and Thomas Mapfumo provides an important illustration. From singing in support of the Chimurenga[13] war effort, to corruption and to eventually self-imposed exile after criticising the government on numerous fronts. The music and exile of Thomas Mapfumo exemplifies the socio-political and economic transformation of Zimbabwe, and the shifting place of music in the country and its elsewhere. His music transitioned from songs such as 'Zimbabwe-Mozambique' and 'Pfumvu Paruzevha', to 'Corruption', and then 'Mamvemve' and 'Maiti Kurima Hamubvire', ridiculing the government for corruption and the failure to utilise the land (Eyre & Mapfumo, 2001; Fischlin & Heble, 2003; Maurice Taonezvi Vambe, 2000). On the other end was the music of people like Andy Brown's Pachigaro Chamambo and Simon Chimbetu, who, from the days of the Marxist Brothers—a band composed of the Chimbetu brothers—had adopted a pan-

[13] Zimbabwe's liberation struggle that culminated in independence from colonial rule in 1980

African ideology in their music amenable to ZANU (PF). With the heightened political tensions in the country, their music similarly transitioned, and contrary to Thomas Mapfumo's, became supportive of land reform and the government's vaunting of 'indigenous economic empowerment'. These instances here are not to say that music existed only along these binaries, yet they show how music as and mediating sociality was part of a changing socio-political and economic spectrum, and it is some of these songs that Zimbabweans in Britain travel with, dance and listen to, becoming pathways to the reconstructions of home and memory outside the frames of polarised politics, and in an elsewhere that gives the sounds and rhythms of the music reconfigured meanings.

Musicking in Zimbabwe has thus historically occupied an important, sometimes palliative position, especially during periods of intense political and economic crisis and uncertainty. Winston Mano has argued for the case of seeing popular music in Zimbabwe as journalism, articulating concerns that may be elided by mainstream mass media (Mano, 2007). Popular music in his regard can represent ordinary people, ridicule the powerful and serve as a voice for those on the margins. The place of music in relaying, directly and implicitly, the frustrations and aspirations, feelings, flesh-body-mind work, of many amidst political demise, is not physically or geographically bounded to Zimbabwe , as witnessed in the songs about the politics, acknowledged or interpreted as such, by artists such as Oliver Mtukudzi , Thomas Mapfumo or Leonard Zhakata, among many others.

Here I am not trying to argue the Zimbabwean situation, and the attendant music, as necessarily originary to the relationships of being and belonging amongst Zimbabweans in London. Rather, I see it as co-constitutive, as shaping the routes of musical mobilities and transnational circulation, and being involved in what may be regarded as dialectical processes of musicking. The transnational character and diasporic sensibilities of being Zimbabwean in Britain make it useful to understand how music has featured in the context that pushes Zimbabweans to leave for the elsewhere.

The place of music, and how it simultaneously is a product of and expresses sociality, has been argued in the case of Zimbabwe in different ways. Turino shows that as

recently as the 1950s, very few black Zimbabweans conceived of musical activities as full-time professional careers (Thomas Turino, 2000). For many, music and dance were aspects of participatory occasions that were part of sociability and spirituality itself. In arguing for an understanding of nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Zimbabwean urban music, Turino's contention is that cosmopolitan cultural formations are composites of multiple sites and their contributions. Yet cosmopolitan formations are also usually more heavily influenced by certain particularly powerful sites, such as the UK and London for instance. This is especially so when the relationships of entanglement find early expression in colonial modes of articulation, and consequently, the idea of the postcolonial.

Turino adds that, as suggested by many writers, cosmopolitanism is not uniform across different places, and it is not a unitary phenomenon. James Clifford's idea of discrepant cosmopolitanisms certainly points in this direction (McCann & Clifford, 2014). Different cosmopolitan formations of varied size and global influence and power may coexist and produce varying forms of sociality. This argument becomes particularly important in the recognition that cosmopolitanism begins at 'home', here home being 'place of origin', or departure—Zimbabwe. Here again, the received categories of place and boundary that inform the understanding of Zimbabwe come into relief. The cosmopolitan articulations are in this vein not necessarily just between Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Britain, but also follow different and multiple routes, including South Africa. Contemporaneously, these multiple articulations are taking place both at the level of physical, transnational and diasporic mobilities, and also the virtual, where Zimbabweans are present on online platforms, discussing Zimbabwe and sharing music.

This means that those earlier Zimbabweans like Mudhara Wala leaving Rhodesia, and the younger ones coming later like Catherine, are already inserted into transnational circulations of musical forms, before and as they enter the UK. The kinds of transnational connections, for instance between Mudhara Wala and Fred Zindi, also finds expression in the modes of musicking taking place in both Zimbabwe, and the UK. As I grappled with writing and rewriting ethnography, I met a Congolese man, Norbert, who told me a story about Isaac Musekiwa, who had apparently travelled from then Rhodesia to Zaire, ending up playing the saxophone

with Franco Luambo Makiadi. It was an example of the narratives of Zimbabwean mobilities that I am interested in, that take place within and in spite of the enduring oppressions, and are accompanied by rhythms and sounds, dances and memories that fuse to produce enmeshed sounds that speak of different places, tell stories of journeys, pasts, presents and futures, even as they foster a seemingly banal conviviality.

Sibanda argues for the applications of Bakhtin's notions of expressive intonation and addressivity to analyse Oliver Mtukudzi songs and their possible underlying political meanings (Sibanda, 2004). She translates some of Oliver Mtukudzi's lyrics to reveal indirect references to socio-political issues songs in Shona. For instance, the song 'Magumo' is regarded as a warning against the excesses of power and money, and 'Bvuma/Wasakara' as a subtle dig at Robert Mugabe, telling him he is now too old and should leave power. Mtukudzi himself has not admitted to any of this. His earlier songs, especially early post-independence, however, had clear political messages, much like many other songs by artists who were celebrating the formative stages and the nascent promise of independent Zimbabwe. The social and political valency of Oliver Mtukudzi's music is also recognised by Jeniffer Kyker, who describes a conversation with Mtukudzi at the Harare International Festival of the Arts in 2008, at the height of crisis. Mtukudzi felt that the message of the festival had been divisive, and was arguing for peace and unity. She cites his song 'Ngoromera' as an example of his rejection of the use of violence as a political tool. Mtukudzi's music thus becomes a site for the construction of *unhu*, being human or personhood. The music traces a history of anti-colonial resistance and loss, to the struggle of post-colonial nation building and the advent of HIV/AIDS, among other things (Jennifer Wyatt Kyker, 2011; Jennifer W Kyker, 2013, 2016). Mtukudzi's commentaries on social issues hold appeal and meaning at home, and in the elsewhere.

In a section he calls *Natty-dub-it ina Zimbabwe,* referencing Bob Marley's performance at Zimbabwe's independence celebrations, Chikowero discusses how Zimbabwean musicians embraced independence and the end of colonialism (Moses Chikowero, 2008), with songs by the Four Brothers like 'Makorokoto', Marshall Munhumumwe performing in Britain and bands like the Chimbetu brothers who called themselves then the Marxist Brothers, with pan-African songs in Swahili like Africa Inaliya.

Thomas Mapfumo was of course at the forefront with Chimurenga music. Turino adds that, focusing on music and Zimbabwean nationalism, the state made efforts at constructing a cohesive nation and national identity through music (Thomas Turino, 2000). At the time, Thomas Mapfumo was marketed as Zimbabwean worldbeat, yet he was seen as a nationalist musician, playing 'Chimurenga' music associated with the Zimbabwean revolution. Nyawo further highlights how music post-2000 became an integral part of what was regarded as the Third Chimurenga, of land and economic reform, and national unity (Nyawo, 2012). This was especially poignant through the hosting of *biras* or national galas, all night musical events that were officious and celebrated different nationalist holidays, which have also been argued as forms of cultural nationalism. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Willems, 2009) (Muchemwa, 2010; Willems, 2013). Bere has focused on what has been termed in Zimbabwe 'urban grooves' a genre that incorporates elements of local and global popular music (Chari, 2009) and how it was co-opted by the Zimbabwean state to be part of a nationalist discourse, especially post the fast land reform programme in the year 2000 (Bere, 2007). This is exemplified by a musical group, Pax-Afro, which Bere argues was funded through the then minister of information, Professor Jonathan Moyo, as part of his emphasis on what was regarded as 'local content'. Together with the institution of the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001, and what were called 'galas', music festivals where politicians would make speeches, and Zimbabwe's political heritage re-emphasised, urban popular music was co-opted. Mbira-playing musicians like Tambaoga were also co-opted to become part of the musical messaging and provide traditional validation, with songs such as Hondo Yeminda characterising the struggle for land in Zimbabwe.

This euphoria was to later shift, with musicians beginning to reflect on the corruption that was beginning to be rampant, and the plight of the workers in the country, which was similarly theirs. Chikowero gives the example of songs such as Angila Mali by Lovemore Majaivana and Chinyemu by Leonard Dembo (Chikowero, 2008). The workers' struggles were also to be heard in the song 'Foromani' a Shona version for foreman, by System Tazvida, which berates the foreman who thinks workers are slaves and subhuman, things with no blood. With earlier indictment from the champion of Chimurenga music and the liberation struggle Thomas Mapfumo with his song 'Corruption', the disillusionment with the idea of Zimbabwe,

and the absent gains of independence increased. Further to becoming an avenue to the possibilities of political articulation (Allen, 2004), musicking, in Mbembe's terms, in a context like Zimbabwe, matters. In a sociological context where misery, anguish, trauma, terror and horror are not only daily realities, but constitute the state of the subject, dancing becomes a way of journeying—outside of the self ,this temporary stay outside of the self, this is joy . For, to dance in a regime of the ugly and the abject is to rid oneself, in an instant, of the *labour of the slave.* Suddenly, the demon falls silent. Shaped and sculpted by sound, the subject relinquishes himself or herself and erases from his or her face the expression of destitution (Mbembe, 2005).

In the 2000s, with land reform and political crisis at its height, the government instituted media reforms to introduce legislation that was seen as repressive and stifling of expression, including that of musicians. Part of the legislation also mandated radio stations to play 70% locally produced content, resulting in the emergence on a wider scale of what is termed urban grooves, and consequently, the now popular Zim-dancehall. Thram observes that in this period, popular music was politicised and censorship-sanitised with the Broadcasting Services Act (Thram, 2006). It is this period that also witnessed Thomas Mapfumo leave for self-imposed exile in the United States, where he has been based ever since, and has continued to sing about the repression in and demise of Zimbabwe.

I acknowledge here the possible influence of music in/from Zimbabwe, but I also recognise, for example, the arguments by Sassen, on the importance of moving beyond the nation state, Wimmer and Glick-Schiller of working beyond methodological nationalism (Sassen, 2000; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) and recognising the transnational and trans-local, or what has been called the global imaginary. Zimbabwe does not thus exist solely as a quintessential point of origin, but also becomes a node in the transnational networks and social fields that Zimbabwean migrants in the UK are part of. Recognising the relationship that Zimbabweans in Britain have had and continue to have with the wider Afro-Caribbean diaspora is precisely what the experience of Wala shows. This relationship continues to manifest in the versions of Zimbabwean dancehall I experience, as well, especially in the time of writing in London, with Afrobeats. I cannot remember a Zimbabwean event where an Afrobeats song was not played

during my fieldwork, and even after that, particularly popular amongst younger Zimbabweans who are now growing up in Britain and engage more with the wider African diaspora than their parents who were focused on migration and surviving the precarities of mobility and dislocation.

At a Christmas gathering in Hatfield in 2014, one lady told me that when she left Zimbabwe to come and claim asylum in Britain, she carried with her, among the few belongings she could gather, a cassette of *sungura* musician Alick Macheso, as a symbolic attachment to Zimbabwe, and to the children she had left behind in the country. She pointed out that among many, one of her favourite songs by Alick Macheso was 'Pakutema Munda', a song that decries the way collective work is sometimes given individual credit. As she talks, and evokes the nostalgia and memory tied to the music, to her now late father, to a home, Zimbabwe, that used to be, and the difficulties of life in Britain, I am also wondering about the individual credit I am pursuing, in translating both individual and sometimes generalisable collective stories, of these Zimbabwean bodies, and the inevitable discordancy that ensues. If I struggle to extract, even from my own body, the traces of emotion and experience of the elsewhere, what of these 'other bodies' that move and get blocked, cut, bleed, wiggle in and out of places and spaces, walls, and still find rhythm, and respond to the sounds of the here and there. 'Pakutema Munda' and Alick Macheso's bass guitar become a deep mourning sound, a rallying cry, around which we both manufacture Zimbabwe as it used to be, and commiserate on the flesh work, the body and emotion-feeling work, the psychological-intellecting realms, in how we engage this elsewhere. We consume and create, as real as imagined, a sort of sonic safe space, that is malleable and permeable, a world of fickle magic that offers transcendental moments that break the temporal mould.

Later, during a graduation party we were both present at, she would constantly request songs from this particular album, and reminisce on the tough and risky journey she had undertaken. She sadly lost her father during the Christmas of 2014, and we could neither celebrate with her, nor adequately mourn with her, as she could not return to bury her father in Zimbabwe because of her asylum restrictions. Political turmoil spawns dislocation(s) that can exist as both reprieve, enabling, and also constraining.

A crucial aspect that her experience alerted me to was the intersection of the private and intimate with the public and collective in the manner that David Hesmondhalgh proposes (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). In sharing an anecdote about music, a cassette, musical technology, a genre, asylum and family, this Zimbabwean woman was also sharing with me how music was imbricated in a private space of mourning, loss and remembering, as well as in what could be regarded as a public and collective space and experience of socio-economic and political demise in Zimbabwe. This demise then saw her leave her children behind, and go through a bureaucratic process of claiming sanctuary and legitimacy in Britain, that saw her miss her father's funeral in Zimbabwe because she did not possess the right paperwork to travel. In the moment of recollecting moments and requesting songs, I draw these insights that signify the place of music in belonging and place-making, in ways that are not immediately obvious when they are shared.

In conveying the experience of mourning and loss, and the seemingly recuperative and redeeming elements of gaining legal status in Britain and finally being able to bring her children to the country, affect runs seeps in and out, fluidly, of these experiences. I feel, and she feels. I imagine the sense of loss that comes with separation and a remembering that is not nostalgia or a yearning for a stability in the past, but a remembering of pain, of embodying a strangeness that is simultaneously fixing, for in search of the stability that comes from losing home, it seems one can also gain a bureaucratically induced immobility, and must mourn other bodies from a distance. The contradictions of departure as loss and gain here become apparent, and the mediation of music by some means becomes a thread, connecting the private and intimate experiences of loss, mourning and remembering, as is the public and collective experience of dislocation, losing home and mourning the precarities and impositions of strange places.

Here questions of home, place and belonging are also brought to the fore. Home as a mythic place of desire and belonging in the diasporic imagination (Brah, 2005) is revealed in the way that even as escaping Zimbabwe is imperative, the sounds and rhythms associated with it evoke an imagined place to which one cannot return. As Ahmed emphasises, migration then not only involves spatial, but temporal

dislocation as well, as the past becomes associated with a home that is impossible to inhabit, and be inhabited by, in the present. In sharing the narrative of the cassette and memories of leaving Zimbabwe, being-at-home does become a question of memory, of the discontinuities of the past and present (Ahmed, 2000).

Her children, who she later managed to bring to Britain, shared with me some of their knowledge of current youth trends in music in Zimbabwe. Utilising such conversations, and a discussion of the Zimbabwe Cup Clash, a musical event I attended in early 2014 in Dunstable, Luton, I also later in this conversation explore the generative possibilities of time, as manifested in a genre such as Zim-dancehall—a Zimbabwean version of Jamaican popular dancehall music and 'urban grooves', Zimbabwe's brand of urban music, which mimics and collapses into it influences of the Atlantic, borrowing a lot from African American rhythms and sounds, as well as local and pan-African music—the relationship of younger Zimbabweans to being elsewhere, and how they negotiate being and belonging.

After traversing the complexities of the Zimbabwean situation and the place of music in Zimbabwe and how it interacts with the elsewhere, one can then delve into the situation and experiences of Zimbabweans in London.

## London is the Place for Me[14]

> To live in London you are really comfortable,
> Because the English people are very much sociable…
> Yes I cannot complain of the time I have spent,
> I mean my life in London is really magnificent…
>
> *Lord Kitchener, London is The Place for Me*

[14] Taken from the song of the same title by Lord Kitchener, I am using this to point to the desire amongst Zimbabweans to come to London, that is etched in a historical imagination of what London is, or represents. I am also at the same time placing Zimbabweans within the genealogy of (black) migration to Britain, which is usually heralded by the Windrush. Other arguments of course point out to black presence in Britain before that (Back, 2000; Gilroy, 1993a). As a song that expresses desire for London and celebrates the place in a certain historical episode, it is also useful as an ironic counterpoint that continues to run through the complications of coloniality, especially in the place that London and Britain occupy in the colonial imagination and their desirability on this ostensible hierarchy of precarity, the demise of Zimbabwe, to the being black in Britain and embodying different forms of alterity.

Hamnett has noted that because of their key role in the international economy, and the size and structure of their labour markets, world cities such as London have long functioned as major destinations for both national and international migration (Hamnett, 2003). Like magnets, major cities like London, and countries such as Britain, attract the ambitious, the hopeful and the desperate, echoing Lord Kitchener and the special place London has in the postcolonial imaginary

From the dominant narratives and my experiences in London with different Zimbabweans it is clear that the post-2000 phase gave new impetus to the understandings of being Zimbabwean in Britain, and to the still emergent generational relationships that Zimbabweans who came to Britain before 2000 and those who came afterwards have, with Zimbabwe, Britain, and each other. This also brings into relief the kinds of transnational and diasporic music connections that Zimbabweans have, based on their journeys and experiences in Britain. I, for one, because of the time I left Zimbabwe in 2008 to live in Johannesburg, before coming to London, have musical roots and routes that are shaped by these different places and spaces. It also means my sense of the transnational is shaped by the relationships I have with Zimbabweans and non-Zimbabweans alike, who have since moved to different countries, or returned to Zimbabwe, which is a rarity considering the socio-political and economic conditions have not improved much for the majority.

The historical relationship between Zimbabwe and Britain means that the articulated modes of capital, as well as cultural production that obtained from colonialism created relations of being and becoming in which the modes of cultural production in many African countries followed, or rather mimicked, in the manner of their economies, what the erstwhile former colonisers manifested. Such articulation also involved the movements of Africans from the 'periphery' in the colonies, to a metropolitan core.

Pasura has characterised this as, albeit a tongue in cheek way, 'reverse colonialism' in reference to the 'influx' of Zimbabwean migrants to the UK, considering the colonial history that the two countries share (Pasura, 2010). Mbiba has argued that the fractured Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK in common parlance is referred to in different ways, as the Rhodesian Diaspora, the Gukurahundi Diaspora, the MDC, or

*Chinja* Diaspora (Mbiba, 2012). These references correspond to the different waves of migration from Zimbabwe since the dawn of independence in 1980 (Sisulu, Moyo, & Tshuma, 2007). The first was soon after Zimbabwean independence in 1980, when white Rhodesians left the country fearing retribution. The second major phase was during the Gukurahundi massacres of the mid-1980s, when Ndebele people were forced to flee the country. The third and most recent wave, post-2000, is what has generated recent interest. I am, however, not averse to the racial and generational disparities that may be revealed in exploring the migrant landscape in the UK, as my research has indicated that there are also white Zimbabwean migrants in the UK, who are referred to as the 'Rhodesian diaspora', but may as well have come to the UK post-2000 land reforms and the demise of Zimbabwe's economy. The socio-political and economic situation, as McGregor and Pasura note, was a huge contributory factor in pushing large numbers of Zimbabweans out of the country (McGregor, 2010; Pasura, 2008).

A different conceptualisation of the phases of migration is offered by Pasura, who proposes five phases of Zimbabwean migration, from 1960 (Pasura, 2014). He argues that the first phase was the migration of political exiles within the context of nationalism and the liberation struggle, allied with recruitment of labour to South African gold mines. This wave was followed by the flight of white Zimbabweans before and subsequent to independence in 1980, what is regarded as the 'Rhodie' diaspora. The third was a product of the postcolonial conflicts in Matabeleland . From the early 1990s, in response to a shrinking economy and opportunities elsewhere, skilled professionals also migrated, constituting the fourth phase. The last phase is the recent exodus of both black and white Zimbabweans because of socio-political and economic decline.

What these different understandings of the phases of migration from Zimbabwe show is that Zimbabwean migration is neither recent nor precisely related to the kinds of political polarisation that emanate from the post-2000 moment. It also makes the case for recognising historical trends in Zimbabwean mobilities to Britain.

Bloch has indicated that there is no sampling frame for Zimbabweans in the UK, making difficult to have a preconceived idea or strict demographics. Bloch further

notes that historically, Zimbabweans clustered in a few towns and cities (Bloch, 2008). The introduction in the year 2000 of the policy of dispersal of asylum seekers who arrived and needed help with accommodation resulted in a much greater geographical spread. At the time of the survey, 46 per cent of respondents were living in London. Bloch adds that the Home Office skills audit, the majority of Zimbabweans—92 per cent—arrived in the UK with a qualification and there was little difference between men and women. Mbiba points out the dispersed nature of Zimbabwean migrants, mentioning that, unlike some immigrant communities concentrated in specific regions and inner city areas of large cities, Zimbabweans appear in every corner of the UK. Settlement in a particular place appears to depend on a combination of factors, such as Zimbabweans' general perceptions of class, access to employment opportunities, access to services—especially colleges—access to good schools for children and availability of affordable housing.

The reiteration of reasons cited for leaving Zimbabwe by participants in Bloch's survey related mostly to the political and economic situation, highlighting how salient this was as a motivating factor. Zimbabweans in the UK have active transnational lives, especially because of migration as a survival strategy for households-remittances, prospective immigrants, transnational political activities. Pasura has argued that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Zimbabweans in Britain display most of the features commonly ascribed to a diaspora such as: involuntary and voluntary dispersion of the population from the homeland; settlement in foreign territories and uneasy relationship with the host land; strong attachment and connection to the original homeland; and the maintenance of distinct diasporic identities (Pasura, 2010).

I am conscious, in relation to diaspora and transnationalism, of what Conversi referred to as the terminological conundrum of the terms (Conversi, 2012). Brubaker emphasises that stretching the term diaspora to refer to any group of migrants has led to diasporas of diaspora, a dispersion of the term leading to its vacuity (Brubaker, 2005). Diaspora and transnationalism, however, remain useful concepts and referential nodes in making excursions into the world of Zimbabweans in Britain. The Zimbabwean diaspora, as Pasura, McGregor, and Mbiba (Mbiba, 2012; McGregor, 2010; Pasura, 2010) show through their studies, can be explored through what Glick-

Schiller and Levitt call the social field perspective to transnational migration. Ways of being and belonging in transnational social fields and networks are contingent, and migrants can as much be transnational as they are (not) part of any localised community or diaspora. Being one does not necessarily translate into the other. As far as the Zimbabwean migrants in the UK are concerned, Pasura (2008, 2009) has already argued that they are a diaspora. I grapple with the complexities of how then music enables or features in transnational and/or diasporic forms of being, especially considering that they are constantly contested, conceptually, as well as experientially. Following Gilroy's exploration of the dialectics of diasporic identification, ambivalences of exile and the complex transnational interactions between and within black expressive culture, I view the relationships that Zimbabweans have to music as embodying the obstinacy and consistent commitment to a better future that Gilroy associates with black music; as well as an emphasis on forms of black sensibility that sometimes face erasure (Gilroy, 1993b, 1994, 1997).

At the heart of the notion of diaspora, Brah advances, is the image of the journey, resulting in settling elsewhere. Consequently, diasporas must be historicised to explore who travels, when, how and under what circumstances. The circumstances of leaving are as significant as those of arrival and settlement (Brah, 2005). In this sense, then, diaspora also concerns the historically variable forms of relationality, encompassing multiple journeys and a confluence of narratives. Diaspora also suggests a subtext of home, placing the discourse of home and dispersion in creative tension, inscribing a homing desire whilst simultaneously critiquing discourses of fixed origins. Exploring Zimbabwean experiences as diasporic thus demands the historicisation of Zimbabwean presence in Britain, which I engage in. The multiple journeys and narratives of Zimbabweans, that reveal both individual and collective experiences and imaginings of home, as Pasura notes, render the recognition of Zimbabweans in the elsewhere as a diaspora useful. To be Zimbabwean in Britain then means to exist in relation to other Zimbabweans in Britain and elsewhere, as well as to other diasporic formations that inhabit the space with them.

Vertovec has argued that the dispersed diasporas of old have become today's transnational communities (Vertovec, 1999). Although Vertovec provides several ideal types in the Weberian sense of what can pass as transnational, akin to, as well

as providing nuances to the traditional typifications of diaspora, such as Safran's, I am interested in the modes of consciousness and social/cultural reproduction (Safran, 1991). I perceive the contestations around the meanings and uses of diaspora (Brubaker, 2005; Edwards, 2001; Tölölyan, 2007) as providing a conceptual as well as a cautionary background, but not a dismissal of diaspora, even in transnational contexts. As Levitt adds in relation to transnational social fields, and equally applicable to diasporas, these arenas are multi-layered and multi-sited, including not just the home and host countries, but other sites around the world that connect migrants to their co-nationals and coreligionists (Levitt, 2009).

In recognising the relationships between transnationalism and diaspora, Vertovec notes that transnationalism offers a conceptualisation of the reconstructions of 'place' or locality, sites of possible political engagement, as well as being a mode of cultural production associated with a fluidity of constructed styles, social institutions and everyday practices (Vertovec, 1999). It is vital for me to consider both the transnational and diasporic facets of Zimbabwean migrants in London, as a way of grappling with conceptual and experiential complexity. The places and spaces Zimbabweans occupy, through music(king) can be simultaneously diasporic and transnational/translocal, which is why I will not opt for any unitary typology of either.

Pasura has observed that, for Zimbabwean migrants, in addition to transnational diaspora politics, strong connections linking diasporans with their homeland are articulated primarily through remittances, and real or symbolic attachments are expressed through music, language and food at social and religious gatherings in the host land. This recognition of diasporic connections provides an ample basis for my exploration of the relationship that Zimbabwean migrants have to musical spaces and places, and how this relationship is indeed characterised by diasporic or transnational forms of engagement.

The formation of what can be regarded as a Zimbabwean diaspora has been riddled with contestations and contradictions inherent in many conceptions of diaspora and transnationalism. As McGregor points out, there are apparent effects of differentiation of opportunity on diaspora formation, social mobility and class identities. Focusing on Zimbabwean migrants in irregular circumstances or what she terms 'abject spaces"',

McGregor intends on capturing the agency of those occupying such abject spaces, characterised by polarised and unequal opportunities in Britain (McGregor, 2008). This example is crucial here because it also offers the kind of writing against abjection I am striving at, in recognising that although confronted with the precarities of dislocation and the elsewhere, Zimbabweans exercise this agency and reconstruct forms of conviviality and sociality.

Mbiba, in his study on Zimbabwean entrepreneurial activities in the UK, discusses the economic aspects of migrancy—entrepreneurship and economic belonging—race, class and abject spaces (Mbiba, 2011). Abject spaces can be simultaneously entrepreneurial spaces. The negotiation of abject spaces is seen in the interaction between the legal and policy frameworks, and the livelihood strategies of Zimbabwean migrants. His study, like McGregor, serves to reveal the contested nature of marginality and the active attempts by Zimbabweans migrants to consume and occupy spaces that are not regarded as abject, economically. The economic activity of Zimbabweans in the UK, and the transnational relationships thereof, are brought to the fore in a study by Magunha, Bailey and Cliffe, which considers the remittances by Zimbabweans in Northern England, noting that approximately 0.94 billion was remitted to Zimbabwe in 2008 (Magunha, Bailey, & Cliffe, 2009). Mbiba (ibid) has also observed that there are many Zimbabwean diaspora groups, networks and businesses that have 'mushroomed' and act to address needs of Zimbabweans both abroad and at home. This became especially salient after the formation of a coalition government in Zimbabwe in 2009, with attempts to locate the Zimbabwean diaspora in this transition by McGregor and Pasura, who explored Zimbabwean diasporic repositioning in the wake of a unity government for reconstruction and development at home (McGregor & Pasura, 2010) .

Zimbabwean diasporic politics are also instanced by Mbiba who discusses Morgan Tsvangirai's cathedral moment in 2009 and Zimbabwe's diaspora politics, which is a diaspora politics of contested identities (Mbiba, 2012). Morgan Tsvangirai was, until elections in 2013, Prime Minister and leader of the opposition in Zimbabwe and was embarrassingly booed when he attempted to encourage Zimbabweans in the UK to return home, a moment that was regarded as manifesting the fractured nature of the Zimbabwean diaspora politics, as not all Zimbabweans shared the same views on

whether it was suitable to return 'home' or not. This reveals how there is no unitary conception of the Zimbabwean diaspora, as even Mbiba (ibid) highlights that in common parlance, people refer to the *Gukurahundi* diaspora, the *MDC* or *Chinja* diaspora, and the *Rhodesian* diaspora. Pasura (2010) similarly recognises the fractures of the Zimbabwean diaspora, the competing meanings, and that there are no fixed, but contingent notions of home or return.

The illustrations of engagement by Zimbabweans in Britain with the idea of home, especially through associational links in politics, and economically through remittances and efforts at being a 'diaspora for development', are evidence of the presence of the shared collective representations and concerns that shape identification and belonging, and the reproduction in some moments of the kinds of political polarisation from 'home'. It is with music also, that these collective representations go on to shape experiences of music and belonging, and how Zimbabweans inhabit space and place, and reconstruct their ideas of home.

The importance of churches and religion in associational links and long distance nationalism, and the role of churches in humanitarian assistance are also worth considering. Work by Pasura has also brought out the role of mainstream churches in integrating migrants and establishing a sense of belonging (Pasura, 2012, 2013). Churches and religion provide modes of incorporation and religious transnationalism. Zimbabwean Catholic youths in the UK seeking to compose new hymns are even expected to submit their songs to the bishops in Zimbabwe first for approval. This shows how Zimbabweans in the UK remain connected to some idea of home and utilise it in establishing belonging. Religion also provides a frame of reference, a moral economy and ways of imagining home as not here, but in an ethereal elsewhere. This is manifest in the Catholic community that I become part of in London, and in the views expressed by the young Zimbabwean Catherine, and her relationship to music that is coloured by her and her family's relationship to the church, and to ideas of moral Zimbabwean femininities.

Chinouya and O'Keefe have looked at sexual health care interventions amongst Zimbabweans in certain communities in the UK and the reinvention of 'tradition' to deliver health and social care interventions (Chinouya & O'Keefe, 2008). Focusing on

the *Pachedu-Zenzele* project in Luton, they observe the use of the two major local languages in Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele, in a Pan-Zimbabwean inclusive way, as well as reiterating otherness and self-reliance. Emphasis on economic, rights and health issues is also exemplified by McGregor's (2010) observation that Zimbabweans predominate in the health care sector, with Zimbabwean networks clustering around the industry. This led to derogatory terms such as British Bottom Cleaners (McGregor, 2007) being used for Zimbabweans in the UK, leading to a magnified loss of dignity and status, as most Zimbabweans were doing jobs that were removed from their previous skills. What is evident in these examples is the emphasis that continues to exist around certain values regarded as Zimbabwean, and the perceptions on status and dignity that draw from social relations derived from 'home', translated into a Britain where belonging and identity have to be negotiated anew, and space and place navigated in different ways.

The migration of Zimbabweans to Britain has also witnessed a proliferation of diasporic media. As Mano and Willems point out, the emerging media provided the space for interaction between the diaspora and the homeland; it became the conduit to express social, cultural, economic and political transnational ties between the diaspora and the homeland and those in the wider diaspora (Mano & Willems, 2008). The diasporic media surfaced to challenge the community's representation in Britain's mainstream media as well as providing news for Zimbabweans abroad and those in the homeland. Batist uses the case of SW Radio Africa to look at Zimbabwean media in exile. SW Radio Africa is operating from London and trying to be an 'independent voice' to Zimbabweans who are subjected to polarised media practices (Batist, 2010). Mano and Willems (ibid) also cite the 2005 case of Zimbabwean nurse Makosi Musambasi, who was part of *Big Brother 6,* a reality television show in the UK, on *NewZimbabwe.com* discussion forums. As a nurse, Makosi Musambasi was representative of the dominant employer of Zimbabweans, the care industry. In addition, as a Zimbabwean woman, she came into the contestations of Zimbabwean identity, morality and womanhood.

Mbiba (2012:96) further refers to Makosi's ventures into *Big Brother 6*, 2005, as just one example of how Zimbabweans have penetrated every aspect of British society, challenging stereotypes, traditional perceptions and prejudices, refusing the refugee

tag and demanding to be seen as part of the host society. Zimbabwean migrants' presence in popular media is also complemented by literature, as the argument by Mangena and Mupondi (2011) on the metaphors of diaspora and identity that are present in Zimbabwean literature, such as in Brian Chikwava's novel *Harare North.*

To be Zimbabwean in the elsewhere is thus considered part of an emergent diaspora, with diasporic sensibilities, whilst also being transnational, in being part of, and utilising the different circulations and mobilities that characterise the kinds of dis/emplacement and dis/location.

## No Irish, No Blacks: Early Experiences of Britain

A part of the argument I am making throughout is that, although the emphasis in recent years has been on the post-2000 mobilities of Zimbabweans and the exceptionalisation and sensationalisation of the circumstances of their presence in Britain, black Zimbabwean presence has always been, and should necessarily be, viewed as part of a genealogy of the experience of the Other, the stranger, the black body in Britain. This then means that a reading of the socio-political and economic circumstances that bring Zimbabweans to Britain post-2000 is never complete without the historical traces that frame the experience of the elsewhere for the black body.

I mentioned already that black Zimbabweans in many ways, like any other categorised and demarcated bodies, live, experience and are (re)presented in specific and peculiar ways. To these I claim no immunity. What I try to foreground here, especially in these moments of the collapse of the fictions of the postcolonial and the postracial, and the narrowing walls of a transcendental liberalism, some readings of history and the present become useful ways of ethnographic translation, of performing that labour, that being—flesh-body, emotional and intellecting work—of writing mobilities that are also displacements, dance moves, lyrics that ring, hollow in basements, broken bodies, nigger-hails. Refusals of death and abjection; abjection itself.

This returns us to Fanon, to Hartman, to that wretchedness and fragmentation of self, and the attempt at suturing an archive. In this case, an archive not of the hold of the slave ship, but of the hold of a relations-ship nevertheless, an enduring colonial encounter, of (un)bounded motions and bodies that are archives. How then does one retrieve from a living archive the rejection of abjection and the translation of black embodiment, in dance and song, as dance and song?

I here engage with some of the glimpses and fragments of experience that I got spending time with Mudhara Wala as he related them to me. Wala came to the UK in the early '70s. Zimbabwe had not yet come into existence, and the violence that continues to be debated in Fanon's work was raging as resistance to the settler colonial regime.

He was in his teens then when he had to pack up and leave Rhodesia, Wala conceded when I asked him to share with me some of his memories of his arrival in Britain and his experiences. In his own words, on arriving here coming in from a racist Rhodesian regime one was, if you want, able to feel the racial tension which was in the air in Britain. He had arrived after the *No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs* era, where these signs were displayed in rented accommodation in the 1960s.

> The 'rivers of blood' speech by Enoch Powell (in 1968) was still topical then, Skin heads were marauding the streets with one thing in their minds, to beat up any foreigners they come across. The racial tensions were quite high and these were to later on result in riots further down the line in 1980. Caribbean and African communities were in isolation and people were grouping together as a form of security. There were tensions between the communities as there were always suspicious of one another. It is in this context that music and racism pulled the people together. Reggae was the beat of the day and many late-night blues started mushrooming in these communities, different people began patronising these social houses.
>
> Coming together for the two groups meant there was strength in numbers thus bringing the two communities together. The lyrics of the music was appealing to all the black communities because they were singing about their day-to-day struggles they were facing in a foreign land. Then came Bob Marley with the same lyrics with a new angle on unity and empowerment of the people of African descent. Coming in from Rhodesia then this was like a breath of fresh air at the time I left you had no access to this type of music on the radio or in the shops it was simply not encouraged.

Wala, together with some friends in the early '80s then started Limpopo Club. He argues that it was a conscious effort to create a platform for African music in the UK where Africans could:

> showcase their culture in the best possible way that tells our own stories replicate a social environment that we had grown up with at home and more in that we had a pan African programme, another conscious effort to bring all cultures together under one roof at the Africa Centre.
>
> As the club grew in popularity and stature it was attracting different races & sexes It grew in popularity as one of the essential social fabric in London. We at one point were trying to fight the image which the club was gradually gliding

into, as a pick-up joint were white women coming in to pick up students and black students coming in to pick up white women.

Having said this, it must be said genuine relationships blossomed here as well which has resulted in a generation of children born in this era. We however stirred the shop in the right direction putting music on the map. The Limpopo club served as home from home for musicians & groups coming to tour the UK/Europe were launched such as Baba Maal, Angelique Kidjo, Thomas Mapfumo and Bhundu Boys to name a few.

I am not sure if my knowledge of the Africa Centre preceded meeting Wala or not, although it seems I gained knowledge of both place and person around the same time, fortuitously. I managed to attend some events at the Africa Centre when it was located in Covent Garden, from art exhibitions to some old-school lovers reggae music and a Ghanaian kitchen selling some jollof rice and some other Ghanaian food I knew little about. I had even been fortunate to see the wonderful Bumi Thomas sing for the first time at the Africa Centre, and to see Wole Soyinka, whose name had been a staple of our high school years in Zimbabwe, especially after reading the Lion and The Jewel, and having Lakunle made the butt of many jokes for being outwitted by The Fox. The Africa Centre closed its doors after some protest from some members of the African diaspora who felt that they were losing not just a piece of physical infrastructure, but a sense of spirit and memory that inhabited the place and space in which much had been done, and through which many bodies, black and not, alike, had danced, and kissed, and fought, and forged a sense of being and belonging, that being in the elsewhere, that would be lost with the sale of the place.

Achille Mbembe has argued that with a history of the colonial reorganisation of space and the disciplining of the body, music is regarded as acting to free the imagination and enabling people to sing what cannot be talked about (Mbembe, 2005).

In the consecutive years that I attended the Kilburn festival (or was it the one time of my first attendance in 2013), I had been accosted by a woman of Afro-Caribbean descent, who had repeatedly explained to me the importance of protesting against the closure of the Africa Centre. I had met her before at other Africa-related events and she had made a similar case. What was clear in her assertions of 'Babylon' and Garvey

and Nkrumah, amongst the many names she invoked, was also a disillusionment with the experience of black being in Britain in a moment in which belonging is being made precarious by relations of ownership. The positionality of the black body in relation to capital, particularly when the black Atlantic is considered, and the colonial archive and its modes of accumulation excavated, is not less than tenuous.

I, too, not surprisingly, felt as if the loss meant something more to me, despite having a relationship with the Africa Centre that had been cut off in its infancy compared to my friends and elders. Having managed to refuse death and to establish a sense of belonging through musicking, providing for relationships of solidarity and flesh and feeling work, the presence of a physical infrastructure that affirms that sense of place ceases to be inconsequential.

To belong, in addition, to the bureaucratic and affect-related aspects, amongst many understandings, also means the possibilities and fact of, emplacement. In a way, places like the Africa Centre, and the spaces they created, became part of the invention of home in the elsewhere, or an expression and consequence of, as Brah would call it, a homing desire (Brah, 2005).

Now when the existence of such emplacement is threatened or obliterated by capital and precarity, a sense of erasure can ensue. For Wala and many of the older Zimbabweans and members of the African diaspora, the loss of the specific place of the Africa Centre became part of a broader loss of the gains made with the promise of 'multicultural' Britain, and a destabilisation of the generational possibilities of engendering a different sense of black being built on an understanding of political and musical, artistic and other forms of heritage. What gets lost is both a sense of having built together, and the opportunity to 'burn' together, to be both convivial and resist social death in collective ways. That refusal of death through emplacement becomes imperilled.

Opened in 1964, at 38 King Street Covent Garden, Lloyd Bradley says that the Centre took over a tomato warehouse that ironically had once housed auction rooms specialising in Benin bronzes (Bradley, 2013).

> The idea behind the Africa Centre, as conceived by English Africa enthusiast Margaret Feeny in 1961, was to foster non-governmental relations between newly independent African nations by bringing people together on neutral, apolitical ground. It would also maintain informal cultural links between Britain and her former colonies, while offering a friendly meeting place for Africans living in London. Student-oriented, it held a lecture theatre, a library and a conference room as well as a bar and a restaurant, plus an art gallery and a performance space to showcase the emerging nations' culture.
>
> An immediate success in almost every respect, the Centre seemed to treat music as a kind of anthropological 'experience', rather than a casual social occurrence. While it provided a suitably cerebral hangout, therefore, it neglected that other important aspect of student life: the Friday-night knees-up. Or at least it did, until Wala thought up the Limpopo Club (ibid: 120-121).

Even though the Centre has since opened new premises, the space and place of the old carries with it the memories and meanings of black struggle and conviviality, and a sociality with Britain that has been consequently transformed with the kinds of policing, privatisation and regulation that global cities like London live with in this moment (Cohen, 2012).

During its old existence, The Africa Centre, Wala noted, played host to Africans of different persuasions, including the prominent Ngugi Wa Thiongo, and was a rallying pan-African point, gathering minds and material in anti-colonial struggles and imagining different African futures. It was also a musical space, as Wala emphasised, being the place where Limpopo club hosted their weekly music extravaganza, that saw, as he said, even marriages, and children emanating from the forms of sociality that the Africa Centre and the Limpopo Club enabled. The Centre was even responsible, sometimes in the 1980s, for an exhibition held at the Barbican on Zimbabwean stone sculpture, with people like Herbert Murerwa representing Zimbabwe then, and later to become a minister in different capacities in the Zimbabwean government.

The anti-colonial struggles and other political changes taking place in the different African countries were also accompanied by different musics, and so was the process of decolonisation. Such musical spaces as offered by the Limpopo Club also became avenues for musical variance and fluidity, with a confluence of musical cultures and practices coming together. As more Zimbabweans came into the UK, so did the Zimbabwean musical presence increase. This is how Mudhara Wala put it:

> With the coming of the new groups from different parts of Africa, the Congolese came with new music bringing a change with them forming different bands here in the UK. The large numbers arriving from Zimbabwe came as the Africa centre was in its demise and the Limpopo club left the Africa Centre in 2003. It is now operating as a roving club from town to town club to club.
>
> Similarly, the new Zimbabwe presence meant new UK based bands started forming. Heritage Survival in Manchester, Harare in London, Ogga Kattalog in Nottingham, Anna Mudeka in Norwich, Zimbaremabwe in Brighton, Chartwell Dutiro in Devon. With the increased number of refugees coming in from Zimbabwe other small clubs like Paradise Club were starting, popularly known as kwaCecilia.
>
> Then we had promoters bringing bands direct from Zimbabwe to places like Broadwater Farm, The Stratford Rex. It appears people are tuned in to the music that is popular at home, this is the music they are importing here, Zim-dancehall is currently the most popular one at the moment. It is very easy to bring the artists because it is usually the DJ and singer as compared to bringing a whole band. Post-2000 we have seen Thomas Mapfumo base himself in America and singing from there is his message still got the same impact? Can he compose meaningful lyrics from that environment? Maybe singing the plight for the refugees longing for home?

As we drove in his car to different venues, Wala would share with me stories about how he worked to bring different artists from Zimbabwe to the UK, and the changes that had been brought about by an increase in the number of Zimbabweans post-2000.

There is a clear rupture represented not just in temporal terms, but also in the transformations of space and place that I will later engage with when I look at the *gochi-gochi*, the barbecue space and Zim-dancehall. Often, a sadness was expressed that the sense of community that was embodied in a place like the Africa Centre was no longer present, and that the generation of Zimbabweans arriving in Britain post-2000 will not be able to share in this. In addition, the state of flux and instability engendered by the coerced mobilities of Limpopo Club are also apparent.

Whereby having a fixed home in the Africa Centre ensured that Zimbabweans and many other Africans knew every other Friday they would be moving to the grooves of Limpopo Club, that trans-local diasporic network was shattered by the shifting configurations of space and place in London, and the predatory nature of hyper-capitalism. Buildings and other spaces are transformed with far reaching consequences for livelihoods and forms of sociality. It is here where one also recognises the convergences of the private and intimate and the public and collective. Wala's negotiation of London as an individual was shaped by places like the Africa Centre, whilst they simultaneously represented both a real, and in the mould of Anderson, imagined community (Anderson, 2006).

In a place that one has learnt over time to call home, their homing desires become emplaced, multifariously, in places like the Africa Centre and the musical forms, the dancing, the networks of the Afro-Caribbean and the other diasporas that it brought together. These transnational and diasporic forms of sociation created a social field that enabled Wala and those of his generation to reconstruct their idea of 'musical home' to perform a sense of the pan-African and transnational, and carving belonging and identity in a London in which they made unique contributions through black expressive culture. Home ceases to be just the place of origin, Zimbabwe, but significant other places, that in themselves become a space of imagining being and belonging, and transcending the possible bordering of the everyday, in the elsewhere.

## Club 414 and Paul Lunga in Brixton[15]

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,
    I heard a Negro play.
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light
    He did a lazy sway…
    He did a lazy sway…
To the tune o' those Weary Blues.
With his ebony hands on each ivory key
He made that poor piano moan with melody.
    O Blues!
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.
    Sweet Blues!
Coming from a black man's soul.
    O Blues!
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—
    "Ain't got nobody in all this world,
    Ain't got nobody but ma self.
    I's gwine to quit ma frownin'
    And put ma troubles on the shelf."

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.
He played a few chords then he sang some more—
    "I got the Weary Blues
    And I can't be satisfied.
    Got the Weary Blues
    And can't be satisfied—

[15] I published parts of this section during the course of my fieldwork on What's on Africa, a publication of the Royal African Society. In addition to being a process of creative interest, it has also turned out to be useful in translating the experiential as the present, in acknowledging how my ethnographic writing, as I would argue most is, is always in the present, even in engaging with the archive or events that, according to the dominant perception of time, are in the past.

I ain't happy no mo'
And I wish that I had died."
And far into the night he crooned that tune.
The stars went out and so did the moon.
The singer stopped playing and went to bed
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

*Langston Hughes, The Weary Blues*[16]

Having provided Wala's early experiences of Britain and his early engagements with music, I move here to the present of the ethnographic moment. Here I engage with an event that I attended in Brixton in 2014, where Paul Lunga, a Zimbabwean Township Jazz artist was playing. I write here of the event as I experience it in the moment, evoking the affective aspects, as well as memory, space and place. I intersperse the musical event and experience with the narratives that Mudhara Wala proffers, interweaving the past and the present in way that, and in order to manifest that messy and tangled nature of the ethnographic encounter, even as I endure the contest for logical coherence. The musical event becomes a moment through which I reflect on the trajectories of Zimbabwean being in Britain through the experiences of Mudhara Wala, as reflecting on aspects of affect and being in place and space, how, I am affected—by memory, the event, history and the present.

My leanings here may be better articulated through Achille Mbembe, who, in his exploration of the aesthetics of Congolese music, notes that the aesthetic signification of a musical work is revealed through that which links the work to a world of sensations (Mbembe, 2005). Musical beauty therefore has meaning in—and through—its effects, through the feelings and passions that the musical work produces in the subject who is listening to it, is present at its performance or is dancing in accompaniment to it. In addition, he argues that there is nothing more complex than verbalising that which involves the non-verbal, or describing sound, which, in essence, is neither linguistic nor involves the purely spontaneous practice of language. Aesthetic interpretation here supposes that sensory material is

[16] (L. Hughes, 2015)

reorganised by what might be called the sound event, in the very process through which the latter frees the imagination.

The aesthetics and contradictions of this musicking can also be understood through Sarah Ahmed's exposition on affect. She describes affect as what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects—the messiness of the experiential, the unfolding of bodies into worlds, and the drama of contingency, how we are touched by what we are near (Ahmed, 2004). I would say here that we are also touched by what is not near physically or maybe materially—what also is imagined, remembered and retrieved from the past also touch us. This recognition, space of engagement with affect, with feeling and the flesh-body work of being, also reminds one, following Ahmed, that some bodies are presumed to be the origin of bad feeling insofar as they disturb the promise of happiness, which is re-described as the social pressure to maintain the signs of 'getting along'. A similar position is adopted by Anderson in what he refers to as 'affective atmospheres'. In this sense then, the event and moment of experiencing Paul Lunga at Club 414 occurs within, and evokes, certain affective atmospheres.

Being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, I argue, means inhabiting a body that, in the places and spaces in which legitimacy is demanded and sometimes borrowed—black bodies, black female bodies—blackness is the killjoy in the everywhere of the elsewhere. Seigworth and Gregg add that affect arises in the midst of *inbetween-ness*: (that interstitial, intercalary negotiation of being in the elsewhere for Zimbabweans) in the capacities to act and be acted upon but also as a generative, pedagogic nudge aimed toward a body's becoming an ever-more worldly sensitive interface, toward a style of being present to the struggles of our time (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010).

To buttress the affective aspects of ethnographic experience, even where affect is not being turned into a central conceptual tool, I will also borrow what Favret-Saada says in her reflections on her fieldwork on Bocage witchcraft (Favret-Saada, 2012). In her estimation, affect can be viewed as a critical dimension of field work (being affected) and as a starting point for developing an anthropology of therapy. Participation itself (not just, or necessarily the observation that sometimes predominates) becomes an instrument of gathering and constituting ethnographic experience and knowledge.

This cannot be emphasised more here, as I have already discussed my insider-outsider conundrum, and the way I am always present in the translation of ethnographic experience.

Stoller has argued for a sensuous ethnography, which I reference here in the service of affect. For instance, in a study of West African trading in New York City, Stoller recognises that 'the field' in anthropology is becoming a dizzying array of crosscutting transnational spaces within zones of multiple contestation—intersections of history, space and place and the politics and policing that accompany such (Stoller, 1989, 1996, 2004). Similarly, I argue here that the diasporic and transnational complexities of Zimbabwean musicking require a more sensuous approach to ethnography, an approach in which 'local' epistemologies and sensory regimes are more fully explored. What is local to Zimbabweans in Britain is certainly multiple and varied, producing consequent experiences. I engage below with the musicking moment in its ethnographic present. This moment also functions as a gateway into exploring an array of aspects to music and being Zimbabwean in this elsewhere.

## Performing the Decolonial: Music and Migration to Britain through Rhodesia into Zimbabwe

An exploration of the historical presence of Zimbabweans in Britain, as also experienced by some of the Zimbabweans still living in London during the time of my experiences in the place, provides a foregrounding for the (inter)generational (dis)connections and the temporal and intercalary ways of being, being from, and elsewhere simultaneously, embodying and performing a Zimbabwe that exists as a past idea, as well as a present. Older Zimbabweans/younger Zimbabweans, not necessarily negotiating being in oppositional ways, yet punctuated by (dis)similar histories and experiences (time/narrative).

In his appreciation of Sylvia Wynter's analysis, Kamugisha posits that the black popular, particularly in the form of music, is where we might see intimations of the human in our present anti-black world. Black music is an underground reservoir of "cultural heresy" through which black reinvention, constitution, and transformation both express themselves and become possible. It engenders the 'psychic state of

feeling' necessary for black revolt. The black oral culture, has functioned as a sustained and prolonged attempt to reinvent the black as human, in the face of intolerable pressures, material and psychic (Kamugisha, 2016). Yet the secret of black music lies beyond its subversive value. Wynter writes that reggae, like the blues, like jazz, articulates the *revolutionary demand for happiness* on the part of the wretched of the earth—the global natives of all races disrupted from their traditional cultures into twentieth century terror. Black music is an ethical blueprint for black life. It provides spaces of imagination for other forms of being, and is central to the making of the new person beyond coloniality. Black happiness in an anti-black world is an achievement in itself.

The specific reference to blackness in America, in Kamugisha's position, does not detract from seeing the merits in the arguments and possibilities when it comes to being Zimbabwean, especially in Britain. Musicking, in addition to being part of ways of articulating frustration, also exists then as a rejection of abjection, as life affirming. The relationship to music, and being, from the state of administrative settler colonialism, to belonging in the elsewhere, becomes part of an important trajectory in exploring what it means to exist, as black, as Zimbabwean, and to occupy place and space, as sociality and relations of power, that are sometimes mediated by music. This constitutes part the suturing of the historical and the present and how they are enmeshed, as a description and discussion of the experiences of musicking that come with the post-2000 socio-economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. I am also interested here in the possibilities of what I discussed as 'generative' possibilities of the temporal suggested in the (inter)generational, not precisely referencing age, but historical circumstance, in time and space.

Through the stories and experiences of the Zimbabweans like Wala, I establish historical traces of the traditions of music and performance that exhibit the (dis)continuities in the present. There is an overt political tone to the musicking of this era, tied to anti-colonial resistance, transnational circulations of 'culture' and diasporic connections amongst different sites of blackness and political resistance. A prime example is the kind of place that the Africa Centre, now closed and relocated, occupies during this time as a rallying point for anti-colonial and decolonial struggles.

Irving, in addition to his reference to Fabian's argument on the always 'memory-at-work' nature of fieldwork, points out that:

> The problem facing anthropologists during fieldwork, especially given the centrality of memory, reverie, and imagination to ethnographic practice, is how to bring events from the past into life when there is no independent access to people's consciousness, memories, or the past. This is particularly problematic as memory is involved in each stage in the production of ethnography, from fieldwork to writing up the final text (Irving, 2007:186).

The construction of the ethnographic present that I experience and translate here is also simultaneously an invoking of memory, in recalling the idea of Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwe that exists in temporal and corporeal terms, a past and imagined sense of place and space and the kinds of music that accompany, or are accompanied by these. Zimbabweans present in this historical moment identified with an eclectic mix of musical traditions, from the rock and roll of Jimi Hendrix, to the jazz and blues of Miles Davis, that constitutes an appropriation of/participation in a certain 'black Atlantic'. As one friend opined, at this time, reggae was the soundtrack of resistance, which witnesses Bob Marley performing at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 (Jaji, 2009). Post-independence in Zimbabwe saw a multitude of bands come to perform in Britain: John Chibadura and the Tembo Brothers; Marshall Munhumumwe and the Four Brothers; Ambuya Stella Chiweshe; and the rise in popularity of Thomas Mapfumo's Chimurenga music, which had featured in the anti-colonial struggle and was already popular in Zimbabwe, with songs such as 'Zimbabwe Mozambique', celebrating the collaboration of Zimbabwe and Mozambique in the liberation struggle—as well as the likes of Biggie Tembo and the Bhundu Boy's and the invention of 'world music'.

Walters channels Ralph Ellison in his position that the act of writing requires a constant plunging back into the shadow of the past where time hovers as a ghost-like invitation to re-examine the multiple archives that have produced our historical consciousness (Walters, 2013). They also invoke Saidiya Haartman, arguing that writing the history of the dominated requires not only the interrogation of dominant narratives and the exposure of their contingent and partisan character, but also the reclamation of archival material for contrary purposes.

The historical traces, performances and experiences of decoloniality also intermingle with aspirations to 'be modern' a desiring and desired cosmopolitanism that ties Zimbabweans to a wider African diaspora in Britain and elsewhere, and a pan-African and black experience of music and/as resistance. Whilst running the risk of falling into some cliché humanistic proclivities, I also argue that musicking becomes part of claiming humanity, artistic ingenuity, space, place and belonging. It inserts the black body, the Zimbabwean body, within a (problematic) milieu of 'multiculturalism', which vaunts for the appreciation of 'diversity' as one way of making sense, use of, and 'tolerating' the dislocated.

Chartwell Dutiro, in Dutiro and Howard, has provided a somewhat similar historical tracing of his musical experiences from colonial Rhodesia, through to Zimbabwe and his time in Britain. Referring to Rhodesia as a place and space on his musical journey, he says, "You can see that I was actually born in a very violent, cruel, harsh, oppressive and imperialist situation" (Dutiro & Howard, 2007:10). One here can also not overstate what Marable, in Marable and Agard-Jones, sees as the intertwinement of transnationality, of blackness, history, capitalism and the present, among other things (Marable & Agard-Jones, 2016). I am not sure I agree with Dutiro's views around the urban in Zimbabwe and the loss of authenticity in mbira music, which evoke Adorno's arguments around music, commodification and the loss of authenticity. I do concur that the hypercapitalist realities that shape and are shaped by these transnational connections produce varied forms of black/African musical being, and at times commodified and zombified versions of being, with the—in the moment fashionable—indictment of 'cultural appropriation'.

Yet as Les Back and Paul Gilroy note, paradoxically, the mechanical reproduction of music through recording also enabled black music to travel in ways that were previously unthinkable. The sounds of black music circulated within the African diaspora and enabled connections between dispersed peoples through place and time (Back, 2000; Gilroy, 2013). These reproductions and mobilities are what finds Zimbabwean music in the elsewhere, mediating a social web of relations into which black musics are received, enjoyed and ultimately practiced.

The understanding of the decolonial that I utilise here encompasses that which is encapsulated by Mignolo in recognising that it has been traditionally assumed that the knowing subject in the disciplines is transparent, disincorporated from the known and untouched by the geo-political configuration of the world in which people are racially ranked and regions are racially configured. The introduction of geo-historical and biographical configurations in processes of knowing and understanding allows for a radical re-framing (e.g. de-colonisation) of the original formal apparatus of enunciation (Mignolo, 2009). Although much, as Mignolo recognises, has shifted, the grammars of the coloniality of power remain hegemonic.

Decolonial thinking allows us to grasp and engage with deeper dimensions of the condition of crisis, just as decoloniality itself introduces a critical condition, effectively *is* crisis, in relation to traditional (hegemonic) modes of thinking, perceiving and acting. They further argue that to the extent that concepts never just mirror an external reality but rather help produce that reality, including potentially rendering as non-existent aspects of reality that other concepts might bring to the fore, the question of one's conceptual nomenclature is no trivial matter. It is useful to think about the world along the fault lines of the coloniality of power, as a socio-historical totality with multiple, heterogeneous and often conflictive logics or movements. At stake in this process of decolonial knowledge production is not simply the substitution of one set of concepts for another. What is crucial, rather, is the opening to, accessing, and thinking and acting from different worlds, alternative arrangements of the social and different political and epistemic possibilities. This also presupposes a shift in one's methodological choices and sites of intervention, as I have already made reference to.

Back to the colonial in Zimbabwe, it is this historical period that also witnesses the embryonic origins of the gendered Zimbabwean diaspora as women, for instance, then had relatively easier access of entry into Britain, especially to pursue nursing, under a different immigration regulation regime to what exists post-2000, as a consequence of the frosty socio-political and economic relations in Zimbabwe and with Britain. It is also now that a discernible movement out of Zimbabwe, of white Rhodesians, and consequently Zimbabweans, can be gleaned. This is a crucial component that I later pursue in questioning the (non)potential (rather in

abstraction) for the existence of a non-racialised and unitary identity or identification called Zimbabwean,

## All that Jazz

On an ordinary spring, Sunday afternoon in 2014, I arrive in Brixton, at Club 414 early and mill around outside for a bit. The bar has some graffiti drawn on its walls, and I am sure I have passed by the place at some late hour, and even asked about what was going on inside. If I remember well, someone at the door, must have been a security person, informed me there was some house music DJ playing, but the price she told me put me off straight away, and I kept walking down Cold Harbour Lane, only to end up at some place that was called the Dogg Star then, which seems to no longer exist on that street in the way I remember it. On this day, I have invited a friend, and so I decide to be early, just in case there is a mix up. I think part of it is the unfamiliarity of London, that strange ways that my body feels and navigates this place, a place I am yet to know fully, if at all possible. Part of me is content with sticking to the idea of this body, mine, being that of a researcher, searching for those intrigues that are of 'anthropological' interest. It makes it easier to dismiss that implicit, sometimes blatant demands for the legitimation of the presence of your body in a space, in places.

Anyway, today I am waiting to see this man, Paul Lunga, that I have heard of, who has played this music in Zimbabwe, from when I was an atom somewhere in the universe, to this moment where I tread the streets of Brixton, looking across the Ritzy and thinking of the nameless Zimbabwean character in Brian Chikwava's Harare North.

I walk up and down the street, until I get a message from my friend that they are waiting at Brixton Station. I briskly walk up, get them, and walk down back to the bar. A man peeps out of an opening from inside the bar and asks if we are there for "the jazz". I have seen his face at several Africa-related events, and associate with his person a predilection for a generosity of speech. Even before the music has started, as we engage in speech, in body speak, we are affecting and being affected.

Apparently, the band is setting up. In a bit, there is a small group waiting to get in. The publicity said 4 p.m., now it is 4:20. By the time, we have paid and get in, it is about 4:45. I decide to stop checking the time. I get a drink and sit down as the sound system

in the bar plays some of Paul Lunga's music. Briefly after I have sat down from getting a drink, Paul Lunga comes on stage, with a band of three other people. A drummer and two guitarists. He is a tall, dark man, wearing a dark suit. I cannot tell the colour because of the light in the venue. He is bald in the middle of his head, with little hair on the sides. He holds the trumpet in one hand, and looks around the venue. Something about his considered movements reminds me of my paternal grandfather. I am reminded of a moment when my grandfather allowed me to smoke one of his cigarettes, only for a short while. It made me see him as the grandfather that I belonged to, the one who allowed me small liberties. Paul Lunga has that air of a generous old man, at least in my wayward imaginings. These movements of thoughts, the transporting of bodies to another space, are they happening to the other members of the audience, I think. He greets the crowd, gives a bit of historical background to township music in Zimbabwe, and launches into the music, planting a kiss on his trumpet.

Maybe I imagine it, but it looks like the shining instrument reflects my face, or what passes for it as it looks fluid and melting under the lights and movements in the room. From where I am sitting, it is as if the music is coming from this black hole in the hollow of the instrument that my eyes are transfixed on. I have been commenting to my friend on what I find not-so-good graffiti-like writings on the wall of the venue, and I am too close to the stage to keep looking into his eyes, I somehow feel shy. The music, however still gets to my core.

Paul Lunga, a Zimbabwean Jazz musician, has taken his music from Bulawayo to London. Transnational. Just a glimpse. A great musician, but this is not about him, alone. Paul Lunga holds the trumpet like a lover, a sleeping beauty, that, as he blows, he kisses to life, and the room erupts in cheers and ululations. It is my first time seeing him play live, and the atmosphere in the room transports me to a scene somewhere in Yvonne Vera's Stone Virgins, where, in Bulawayo in Rhodesian (colonial) times, black Zimbabweans congregate in a room or basement somewhere, drinking from home fashioned cups, dancing the trials of colonial segregation away to township music.

Yet this is London, Brixton, playing this particular brand of Zimbabwean music and I, like my friend, never saw Rhodesia, except in its vestigial elements, to me at least, in the contemporary socio-economic and political malaise of the past decade in Zimbabwe, and yes, on the streets of London as well. That is the power, in Yvonne Vera, of literature, and of music, to transport you to imaginaries, places and times that you have not lived, and that remain just that, imaginaries. Diaspora, or something that passes for it.

That is also the power of people like Mudhara Wala, who can show you around places in London, and narrate the stories of how they have changed in relation to Zimbabweans, and African music and existence in Britain. Owning stories, power, knowledge and all that jazz, remember it? It is one of the tragedies, that for a people who are not so many as Zimbabweans, archive and memory are lost with individuals, and where they are not, maybe the hunter still tells the story.

I have had the privilege of spending time with Wala, who has been active in the African music scene for over three decades. I respectfully and affectionately call him *Mudhara* Wala, or *Mudhara* Danga. A friend would be quick to remind me that Mudhara sounds like a derivative of what people (the people, through hegemonic nationalist discourse) call the late nationalist and vice-president of Zimbabwe, Joshua Nkomo, *Mdala Wethu*. I will not hazard to translate. Bantu. The musical experience is equally not easy to translate so I asked Mudhara Wala for some thoughts on how Zimbabwean music has changed and grown over the years in the UK.

At the height of the Second Chimurenga, the war of liberation, the music that resonated in the UK in Mudhara Wala's point of view was protest music, in tandem with what was going on in Zimbabwe at that time. The lyrics of music such as Thomas Mapfumo's appealed to the politicised student refugee population. In Mudhara Wala's words:

> Other music types were of the satirical type like Safirio Madzikatire (Mukadota)[and] were [popular when] people needed comforting away from home. It was quite apparent that as people came to the UK they were cutting off links to the rock and underground music they had grown accustomed to in the then Rhodesia opening up to other music forms. Local [British] black

> people were listening to in the UK Soul, reggae and soca music. It's at this point [in the] mid 70s that the formation of Zimbabwe student bands emerged, bands like Shaka led by Fred Zindi, Fungai Malianga Band, Mandaga,Matatu & Bingam Inquiry formed with other Zimbabwean student musicians based in London. On the other part Otiswaygood, a band formed at the University of Rhodesia made up of white rebellious students had also arrived in the UK and were now playing reggae music. The colored [mixed] community had Richard John Smith and Alton Edwards and later Rozalla Miller with a number two [in the UK charts] who were enjoying chart successes in the UK top of the pops. [The] '70s period had people meeting for socials and fundraising for political parties with these bands performing for them and DJs playing the newly released cover lyrics of the new music coming from Zimbabwe like Thomas Mapfumo.

I smile as I think of how, as a little boy, I used to hang around the shops, what we called 'growth points', throwbacks to the era of structural adjustment, at Chakonda, in my rural village in Shamva. Sent to buy bread and milk by my grandmother, I would, after using the change to buy these small sweets of different colours we called viscose, place the milk and bread down, pop the viscose into my mouth like a pack of pills, and raise some dust to Thomas Mapfumo's 'Jojo'. By the time I got home my grandmother would be standing outside her hut looking towards the road, worried, and I could not tell her that 'Jojo' was playing. This was the '90s, and already, from what Mudhara Wala shares, to my experiences, the general and generational (dis)connections in how we enjoyed and understood the music start showing.

Bob Marley graced Zimbabwean independence celebrations in 1980. I have recently read that Marley's namesake, and current, and long-time president, Robert Mugabe, would have preferred the 'cleaner' Jimmy Cliff! So, as the people 'felt ok' towards some reggae vibes in Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans in the UK were also mashing it up with the Afro-Caribbean community with the reggae and soca, as Mudhara Wala points out.

The dawn of independence in Zimbabwe also brought a celebratory turn, with songs such as 'Pemberai' by Thomas Mapfumo, and 'Makorokoto' by Four Brothers, egging on the joy and euphoria of self-rule, the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, in

politics, as in musical expression. In the belly of the Zimbabwean music circles in the diaspora in the UK, Mudhara Wala observes:

> The '80s, as the new dawn of Independence, came in with it a new attitude, new music lyrics which were more to the point. Music was of a celebratory nature with lots (of) bands forming in Zimbabwe and releasing new music. It's at this point we decided to bring in to the UK Zimbabwe bands first with Thomas Mapfumo, Real Sounds, Bhundu Boys, The Four Brothers, Lovemore Majaivana, Oliver Mutukudzi, Jona Sithole, Devera Ngwena, Albert Nyathi, Ilanga, Andy Brown, Mudzimu, Stella Chiweshe, John Chibadura, Dorothy Masuka to name a few. The '80s were graced with the rise in popularity of world music and Zimbabwe benefited in that it became popularized during this period with the Bhundu Boys enjoying huge successes in record sales and popularity, at one point playing to a sold-out Wembley stadium supporting Madonna. I was instrumental in working with all these musicians and bands, bringing them over and setting up their tours.

The shift from protest to celebratory music accompanying Zimbabwean independence also witnessed more mobility on the part of Zimbabwean artists playing in the UK, to the now well established, although relatively small, Zimbabwean community, as well as to a larger audience with the growth of what Mudhara Wala points out to be 'world music'. The contentions around naming are for another time. It remains interesting to note that there was a conscious attempt, even after encounters with different musical influences, to still listen to, engage with and promote what was regarded as 'Zimbabwean music'. So, the music that was gaining popularity in Zimbabwe at that time is music that was also gaining ground amongst the 'diasporans'' in the UK.

You already know that I was dancing to 'Jojo' in that late '80s and early '90s. I am not sure if the late Leonard 'Musorowenyoka' Dembo ever performed in the UK, but I have often heard and read of the legend of one of his songs, 'Chitekete', being played at a Miss Universe event. It seemed Zimbabwean music at this period was enjoying transnational acclaim, basking in the euphoria of a newly independent nation. I think of the '90s as better years, of course, to what I experienced of Zimbabwe post -2000, socio-economically and politically. Yet I also think of structural adjustment, what was

called ESAP, and how we would get these pens branded ESAP in primary school. Because of space limitations, there was such a thing, as still exists I am sure, called hot-seating. One group would attend school in the morning till about midday, another from midday to late afternoon. This meant time sitting on the *bonde,* the reed mat and listening to these artists that Mudhara Wala worked with on their tours in the UK.

Growing up later, in Highfield, one of the earliest black townships in Harare, for me encounters with the 'been tos', people who had travelled to the UK and elsewhere, were rare. There must have been one girl, who I often heard people berating for having gone to the UK and brought back unacceptable dressing habits, of short skirts and tight trousers. I did not mind. A certain kind of music was also starting to emerge, appealing to a younger, urban based, post-independent Zimbabwean generation. Artists like Fortune Mparutsa, who was later to move to the UK, had hit songs such as 'Wangu Ndega'. In a call to use protection at a time when HIV/AIDS was on the ascendance, he used the word condom in the song, and we used to squirm and cringe because the word seemed an obscenity then. Fortune also had a song called 'Kure Kwaunoenda', lamenting the departure of a loved one. Death and departure, reflected in the music, portended the kinds of sociality that were to characterise Zimbabwe in the next decade. Together with songs in the mould of 'Tombofara' by Kelvin and Muzi, who were rumoured to either have returned at that time, or subsequently left for the diaspora, there was a shift to a soul-like, R'n'B-inspired music in Zimbabwe. There are obviously other examples of musicians like Prince Tendai, Edwin Hama, Frontline Kids and many more. Fred Zindi has said the Frontline Kids called their music 'Afro-acid', a fusion of jiti and Western sounds. The Frontline Kids toured the UK in 1991. I struggle, from my memory alone, to remember prominent female artists in that period, nor can I name all those who paved the ground for what we eventually came to call urban grooves in Zimbabwean music today.

There certainly is a very important point to be made about how the music industry then leaned towards men, which was not peculiar to Zimbabwe, and which is something that merits a more sustained conversation around the development of female musicians and their appreciation in Zimbabwe. Colonial morality and laws around mobility and the policing of women's bodies remained critical in shaping urban cultures, as well as post-colonial musical practices. I return to the urban

grooves examples because they offer a poignant instance of how different musical experiences were certainly shaped by place as well as generational (historical) events and concerns. From the protest, to the celebratory, to the urban groves, which are neither mutually exclusive nor linear in their development.

Meanwhile, having established a name bringing Zimbabwean artists to the UK, and the popularity that the music had garnered, Mudhara Wala worked with the other people and groups in African music.

> With the popularity of these tours other African musicians wanted to work with me. We set up Limpopo club at the Africa Centre then at this period with a conscious effort of an African led promotion to push our music forward using a pan-African front. We ran the weekly club for over 25 years bringing different African bands from all over Africa and the Caribbean (of) these include launching and giving their debut performances in London, Angelique Kidjo, Baaba Maal, Misty in Roots, Chanderliers from Trinidad, Bembeya Jazz, Les Amazones, Simba Wanyika, Them Mushrooms, Kokeb, Seeds of Creation, Dele Sosimi, ET Mensah, Nana Ampedu & African Brothers Band, Remmy Ongala, Kanda Bongoman, Sona Diabate, to name a few. It was the hub of African Music in London if not in Europe itself. With the demise of the Africa Centre brought with it less visibility of African music in London and less new talent being showcased, less stages for African bands to perform on. Increasingly we have been observing this lack of spaces for African Bands to perform in London, more and more places closing down.

Having been in London for only a year, I caught a glimpse of the remnants of an active Africa Centre before it folded and was packed onto the shelves of history as a place, a space that once catered to a people. I am sure the walls are stuck with memories, unseen, and the floors invisible footsteps of those who passed through it. Maybe the pores of the building absorbed the sweat and tears of those who danced, cried, found love, fought and made a home for music and art in the Africa Centre. It now only exists to people like me in the stories and memories of people like Mudhara Wala. Lament, or laud, or neither?

In conversations, it was opined that there seems, just as there have been generational shifts with literature, music and all such, to have been a shift in the appreciation of Zimbabwean music, especially in the past decade as Zimbabwe-Britain relations became strained, and particular narratives gained traction in the UK, and in Zimbabwe. Who said music is not politics, and vice versa? This, similar to the historical relationship of women and music in Zimbabwe, and its diasporic communities, merits its own space.

Mudhara Wala, if for different reasons, does believe that there has been a shift in the appreciation of Zimbabwean music:

> The Zimbabwean music post '80s and '90s is not as popular as it was with the host nation [white/British] audiences but has remained confined to the Zimbabwean community. Bands come and perform for Zimbabwe audiences in Leicester, Coventry and London. There are a few bands being formed here in the UK, of these include Heritage Survival, The Gentleman's Band, The New Green Arrows UZambezi, Royal Destiny, Obert Mazivisa, Jane Doka, these last three groups being Gospel. The audiences mostly refugees/migrant workers use the music as a therapy for reminiscing the good times they had when they were still in Zimbabwe. It appears that there is a polarisation, the old and the young in their musical tastes with the growth of Zimbabwe reggae dancehall styles and the urban grooves the young seem to move away from the more traditional type of music—Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi styles now reserved for the middle aged and older folks in the community.

It seems obvious that there would be a generational disconnect, but it is not. Some young Zimbabweans I have also encountered in London are making an effort to reconnect with musical genealogies they may have lost contact with due the migratory journey, and growing up in a different context. Musical tastes have become eclectic, definitions of what is Zimbabwean music (more) multiple, and fusions of different types of music replete. One discovers that musicians like Shingi Shoniwa (formerly of the Noisettes), who may self-identify, or are appropriated as Zimbabwean, play music that does not fit into the mould of either world, or Zimbabwean music. If it is music, played or performed by someone identified as Zimbabwean, does it become Zimbabwean music?

Declines in economic fortune, and technological changes have also brought about a shift in the music, and Mudhara Wala feels it is important for young Zimbabwean artists to still promote traditional Zimbabwean music.

> With the recession, it appears that there are less groups being formed in comparison to the mid '80s. The content of the music and lyrics have changed. Most of the music being produced now is computer generated music. Artists or the technicians have found a cheaper way of producing music this has resulted in the major recording companies closing down. The readily available technology has seen the growth of piracy, less remunerations to the musicians and slow decline in the growth of the music industry. The lack of new acts coming in to the UK has seen audience attendance going down. To move forward one would have to reverse these processes encourage original recordings, play and record live music more it sounds better than the computer-generated music bring back good and sound recording companies that can record and produce high quality music. Encourage good musicianship, good creative lyrics good workmanship, take the music industry as a viable industry like any other. For the musicians, there is a need to develop and compose our indigenous Zimbabwean traditional music to the highest standards. For the audiences, we need to support our local musicians and criticize if you must and be part of our new music renaissance. We have done it before; I am convinced we can do it again.

I regard myself as an eternal optimist, but my views concerning how many fortunes are tied to the politics and socio-economic condition of nations make it difficult for me to see a revival in the fortunes of artists, or recording companies, without the revival of the various sectors of the nations at large. What is indigenous or traditional to a group of young Zimbabweans who have grown up in London, or even their counterparts in Harare or Bulawayo? One also gets the sense of nostalgia in Wala's statements, imagining that it would be possible at all to 'reverse' the changes that have come with technologies of production and distribution of music. The argument for an indigenous music also assumes the existence of a pure version of Zimbabwean music, and originary musical place and home that can be returned to. Yet this, again in Brah's

terms, are the mythical constructions that accompany homing desires, for a place and condition in time that in all probability cannot be returned to (Brah, 2005).

I have watched Winky Dee send 'Afropolitan' youths crazy with his lyrics in Shona from South Africa, to Australia, Canada and the UK. I have watched Lady Squanda sing about common social issues in a language that reconnects to places and times. One can have preferences in musical taste, and make claims to authenticity, but one thing is for sure, Zimbabwean music will never be the same idea that may be held by some of the indigenous of what is particularly Zimbabwean. It exists and circulates in a world that it meets and is hybridised with sounds and rhythms from other places.

When I go to YouTube, and click on an urban grooves song, I think of how far Zimbabwe has come, of what I have missed and continue to miss out on in the lingo of urban Zimbabwe, in the resilience that sometimes seems a curse. When I click on other older songs, I think of my grandparents, my parents, independence celebrations at Chakonda, at the 'stadium' next to the council offices, where Gore the little person used to dance *Jerusarema* with the beautiful girls from Jiti High School. I think of my mother singing songs by the Bhundu Boys, or Clive Malunga, of my father, rarely, doing this dance we always laugh at him for doing. I think of my red Caltex dungaree, bought from the cotton harvest, I think, in which I would dance to 'Jojo' by Thomas Mapfumo, before I knew about oil, and degradation and the general treachery of the world.

By the time Paul Lunga is done raising the sleeping beauty, blowing soft kisses. I am in a trance. He finishes too early. I pride myself in not being awe struck, or a victim of celebrity worship, but I get a CD signed.

In narrating the moments of musicking with Paul Lunga, and the conversation with Wala, I intermingle here aspects of affect and place-making that accompany musicking. The musical event evokes feelings, memories and imaginings in me, and I travel with this moment to the different experiences and perceptions of music that Wala has had, and his thoughts on the kinds of musical mobilities and transitions that have taken place. The movement in narrative between Zimbabwe and the elsewhere here conveys the connections that shape the Zimbabwean musical diaspora, and the

histories through which existence in Britain is arrived at. This intermingling also reemphasises the personal, especially in affect, both mine and Wala's, and the wider collective shifts in music, audiences and musical technologies that impinge in the present on the musicking someone like Wala can engage in.

A point also needs to be made about how these experiences of musicking, in addition to the affect that comes with being in Club 414, and the creations of momentary alternate realities, it is also Brixton as a place and space within which Zimbabwean music is being expressed and enjoyed. This conviviality is already inserted into that genealogy of Afro-Caribbean black music and the mobilities and settling of black bodies in Britain. In the same way that I use Kitchener's 'London is the Place for Me', I am invoking here a relationship between Brixton, blackness and the Zimbabwean experience in Britain. I see it as no coincidence that one of the major works of fiction chronicling Zimbabwean experiences in London, Harare North, by Brian Chikwava, is predominantly set in Brixton, and is reminiscent of the experiences of Sam Selvon's Lonely Londoners. In exploring the traumas of Zimbabwe's politics and migration, Brixton becomes this space and place in which black experience, abjection and social death are not just imagined, but are part of the genealogy of black experience in Britain.

In his excursion into what he terms black London, Henry Louis Gates recognises the way black Londoners sit on the margins, yet come out and own the night. In these places where those from Africa and the Caribbean are to be found, there is a conviviality which for him, of a Saturday night, is their world…at least until dawn on Sunday. It is a world of music and myth and the monotony of mime: Jamaica in Britain, Kingston-on-Thames, Africa in England. But by dawn, the plumes have wilted. And black folks slip away, their brass, fitted for the evening, now tarnished by the light. No longer can they be owners of the night (Gates, 1976). What is captured in an episode here has in a manner become the long-term trajectory that Brixton has taken, from being the place where the nameless Zimbabwe narrator in Harare North could live with other migrants in a squat, to the Brixton confronting gentrification today. Reggae as an institution, the blues nights and the decibels that would drown out all semblance of conversation somehow seem to be on their way out.

It is fortunate that I get to experience, with Wala, some of the musical moments that may soon be in the past as places close. There were several other times we had the privilege to watch some other Zimbabwean acts in Brixton, such as Kuda Matimba and Harare Band, who, with Wala, provided us the opportunity to watch Mokoomba in Shoreditch and Camden, and Anna Mudeka in Dalston, amongst other artists. The reconfigurations of London, manifest in the changes that have taken place in Britain, also mean dispersals in place and space, a further stretching of where these musics can be found; shifts in black expressive culture, and the dislocation of already dislocated black bodies.

## Historical Traces, Transnational Connections and Diasporic Sensibilities: Mudhara Wala and Fred Zindi

> Music is central to the diasporic experience, linking homeland and hereland with an intricate network of sound. Whether through the burnished memory of childhood songs, the packaged passion of recordings, or the steady traffic of live bands, people identify themselves strongly, even principally, through their music (Slobin, 1994:243).

*An old Thomas Mapfumo vinyl record that was being played at a house party*

*Mudhara Wala on the far right and some of the older generation of Zimbabweans and people who worked at the Africa Centre, including Nigel Watt, Keith Shiri who works on African film, and Chenjerai Shiri*

One of the early accounts of Zimbabwean presence in Britain I was given was by Mukoma George. Mukoma George, like several of the older generation of Zimbabweans I spent time with, has been in Britain for over 30 years, engaging in different platforms around anti-racism as well as intellectual work, which he constantly referred to as a privilege to have lived the 'intellectual life', without necessarily suffering the strictures of institutional carcerality. I would imagine though, that the polarised nature of Zimbabwean politics and the ramifications on the diaspora amongst whom he has made known some of his political views, produces a different kind of carcerality and questions around place, space and belonging, especially considering how Zimbabwean presence in Britain remains patently politicised.

I relate here an episode with Mukoma George to further reveal historical and transnational elements, as well the sense of community, deriving from shared generational experiences and imaginations of being Zimbabwean. Mukoma George and Mudhara Wala share, in some respects, temporal and musicking spaces, in those generational and generative terms. We met often at the Africa related events I

attended, such as at the old Africa Centre when it was still open, at the Notting Hill Carnival, and at various other music, art and 'intellectual' events, having been introduced to him by Mudhara Wala, and we would have conversations about Zimbabwean politics and the 'Zimbabweanistas' who in his opinion had come to privatise the hegemonic and sensational narratives about Zimbabwe.

Out of the many conversations we had, he would keep asking me to remind him what my study was about, and each time, we, or rather he, would frame the thrust of the research, especially when other people were present, in a way that elevated my understanding of my own research, especially in the eyes of others. To him, I was trying to write Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean experiences in Britain differently, already, something that I remain doubtful of as possible with the confines of canon and disciplinarity. It is from his, as I have already mentioned, I constantly got the word acousticmologies.

In the generative possibilities of his estimation, I read his views and experiences as akin to those of other Zimbabweans who came to Britain in the late '60s and '70s—whose relationship to music and politics continues to be defined, emphasising the legitimacy of presence in Britain, whilst also resisting a perceived participation, internalising and co-optation into a British identity that thrives of the black body as spectacle.

Often, when I headed to Islington, where he lives, I knew to expect that he would put on some music—one time it would be some jazz, John Coltrane, another some Jimi Hendrix, or Sinead O'Connor remixing some reggae—whilst he jokingly spoke in the gruff, raspy, bass voice reminiscent of Louis Armstrong. The first time I walked into his apartment, he told me about the signed image of James Baldwin on the stairs up to his place, and an image of him and another famous person, I forget who, that he explained. There was never a shortage of historical anecdotes about how London was, the kinds of spaces that were fought for then, and a general disillusionment with current conversations about Zimbabwe, and references to a Zimbabwean diaspora, which he questioned.

One moment he would be pointing me to a book in his library on music, another something on Heidegger, the next I am looking at a DVD on Michelle Basquiat. Many philosophical and theoretical possibilities were explored, in addition to the general and specific accounts of experiencing Britain.

Mukoma George informed me that whilst in Zimbabwe, his father had been a priest. Priests, though black, as part of a colonial matrix of religion and power, were respected, and existed as 'enlightened natives', but still as non-white. He (George) was part of a generation of black people in Rhodesia then that were reaching for the cosmopolitan. They existed both as Zimbabwean, and engaging to listening, dancing and performing the music of the African diaspora, especially black music that was coming out of America as part of the civil rights movement. Rhodesia, as an enclave of white minority rule, did not preclude such young black Zimbabweans as Mukoma George from already participating in their own forms of cosmopolitanism, exemplified by the kind of music that Thomas Mapfumo was playing before his music became Chimurenga, allied to the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

So as already cosmopolitan young men like him and Mudhara Wala followed the routes that many others were taking and found themselves in Britain at a time fraught with forms of blatant racism and discrimination, different from the rather insidious forms that characterise this moment of the seeming collapse of the multicultural or post-racial. They thus became part of transnational networks of anti-colonial resistance, where people of African origin would meet at places like the Africa Centre, or at bars and pubs that have since changed hands and names, and discuss what an independent Zimbabwe, or South Africa, would look like. Part of what I now call the performance of the decolonial was an active role in the anti-racist movement in Britain, in which dub poets like Linton Kwesi Johnson were prominent voices, and music, poetry and other forms of art were critical components of resistance, and ways of establishing legitimacy and claiming humanity.

You see, Mukoma George says to me, *vana vaiuya* then, *vasikana*, to study nursing, it was easier then compared to the difficulties that Zimbabweans have faced since 2000. So *vaigara* in these nurses' accommodation, and *taienda manje* on weekends and that is where people would meet girls, especially black girls *ka, kumba kwemanurse*, and

there would be music and drinks[17]. That was before this spectre of disease, where the black body, the Zimbabwean body, is viewed as a vector of pathologies.

On this day, I have managed to spill some tea on his floor and to mess up the arrangement of the books on one of his shelves, by taking them down and failing to put them back properly. Leave them, and don't worry about the tea, he says, I will sort that out later. The conversation veers to a book that he has just obtained, which is somewhere on the shelf.

The story about *kumanurse* pauses as his eyes scan the shelves for this book. I am told it is about whiteness in Zimbabwe, because somewhere in the conversation, I have highlighted that I am interested in exploring whiteness as invisibility. It is so easy to end up talking about other things here. I embrace it as part of the messy process of existence. In these moments, I have ceased locating myself as an ethnographer or anthropologist. We are immersed in a conversation in which he has more experience and knowledge than I have, but in which we are both invested, from different positions. He finds the book, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape and the Problem of Belonging* (Hughes, 2010). I have not heard of it, but it might prove important later, so I jot it down. For a while the conversation is about his perceived, but still silent, role that white women played in the stabilising and perpetuation of empire, and in the colonial logic of desire. He makes references to Fanon, and he makes sure to sarcastically mention, when he introduces himself to some people, that in addition to many other things, he is a part time sex symbol.

It takes a while before we veer back to talking about music. The music has stopped playing, so he goes to the lounge to replace the CD, or is it a record? I want to use the bathroom, but I trip on the cable connecting the speakers in the library to the radio in the lounge. When he tries to play the music, he realises there is no sound coming out of the speakers. I come back from the bathroom and explain that I tripped. Ha, I am prone to accidents on this day. The speakers are fixed, and the sound of music forms the background to our conversation, about music. Somewhere in these accidents, I am finding allegories, metaphors, of the spills, the cuts, the trippings that characterise not

[17] Here George is referring to how young Zimbabwean women came to Britain as nurses, and how their places became spaces of conviviality.

just the process of research, but existence in the elsewhere, as messy, a reiteration, a re-appearance throughout.

It is significant to consider, and emphasise that the generative possibilities emanate from a time and narrative that are moulded by an understanding of the black body and its relationship to histories and lineages of enslavement and racism, that both resonate with, and are dissimilar to the experiences of Rhodesia, and consequently Britain, that Zimbabweans encounter. One, in this instance, cannot choose what can be regarded as the specific experiences of Zimbabweans, in such historical context, as black and African, relative to those of Caribbean, or South Asian descent in Britain, and the converse also holds true in establishing commonality and general experience. This is especially so when the pervasive place that music occupies in the black imagination, or the imagination of blackness as embodiment, encompassing the wide gamut of dub poetry, to dubstep, reggae and dancehall and the sound system, in carnival for instance, Fela and Afrobeats, Franco and many other artists and forms of music that that display the confluences of experiences and imaginations. In words that can be regarded as essential, the late Peter Tosh, in his musical version of the African diaspora, in the song 'African', says, "Don't care where you come from/ As long as you're a black man, you're an African/ No mind your nationality/ You have got the identity of an African". This soundtrack of the black Atlantic, the lineages of slavery and anti-colonial resistance is also best seen in Bob Marley's music, with songs such as Natural Mystic, Africa Unite, and Zimbabwe, performed at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

I have mentioned that part of the thrust of this conversation is to offer a historical instance of Zimbabwean presence in Britain, and how music has been an integral part of sociality, encompassing social political processes from anti-colonialism and decolonisation to the post-independence musical relationships and the post-2000 shifts.

Recognising that Zimbabweans in Britain are part of the genealogies of black experience also means peering into the cracks and crevices of dominant narratives to find individual and collective experiences that highlight this.

As I navigated the different spaces with Mudhara Wala and engaged in the sense making processes that accompany being in 'the field', I was also aware of the transnational connections that enabled me to access different people and spaces in London, and that continue to exist amongst Zimbabweans in Britain, as among many other migrant and diasporic populations. The historical trajectory that I have traced informing Zimbabwean mobilities, especially to Britain, also meant that those who had returned to Zimbabwe after independence, or moved back and forth between Zimbabwe and Britain, became part of the routes of music and musical connections enduring across time and space. One of the names that Mudhara Wala often mentioned was that of Fred Zindi. I had heard of Fred Zindi growing up, especially because of his instrumental part in the formation and growth of musical groups such as the Frontline Kids in Zimbabwe. At a Zimbabwe research day at St Anthony's College, Oxford, in June 2015, I was fortunate to catch a presentation by Joanne McGregor, already cited elsewhere, who has conducted research and written some important work on Zimbabwe. In her presentation on Zimbabweans in Britain in the '70s and '80s, she also happened to mention Fred Zindi and a band he was part of during his time in Britain, called the Stars of Liberty.

To return to the understanding of music, place and space that runs through this work, I turn to Connell and Gibson who point out that music is spatial—linked to particular geographical sites, bound up in our everyday perceptions of place, and a part of movements of people, products and cultures across space (Connell & Gibson, 2004). I am thinking of music in terms of place and movement, of proud heritages and dynamic, fluid soundscapes. 'Fluidity' or 'spatial mobility' also indicates flows of music, people, capital, commodities and money across space. The intersections of music, mobility, and transnational soundscapes become apparent.

I decided to reach out and write to Fred Zindi so I could get his account of his time in Britain with Wala, in addition to the experiences that the stories Mudhara Wala and other Zimbabweans were providing. Though now based in Zimbabwe, as a professor at the University of Zimbabwe, Fred Zindi was gracious enough to provide me with some narratives of his musical journey, glimpses of his time in Britain, and some insights on the aspect to come later on white musicians, and what I regard to be their invisibility and absence in the hegemonic discourse.

The idea of being 'in the field' is made fluid here, because even as I remain physically emplaced in London, I relied in addition on Fred Zindi, on several archival and referential materials, as is already evident, of experiences in and from Zimbabwe, in attempting to frame, in all its spilling over, an image of a historical journey that Zimbabweans have taken to Britain, once again, as I argue, an instantiation of the enduring colonial encounter. In capturing the continued musical relationships between Wala and Fred Zindi, and the influence that their time in Britain had on music in Zimbabwe and vice versa, the idea of the Zimbabwean diaspora and transnational circulations of culture is reiterated.

The professor started by offering me a background to his musical journey in Zimbabwe, as a prelude to his musical experiences in England. Like Wala, Fred Zindi's relationship to music spans back to the 1970s when he was still in Mutare, Zimbabwe. At the age of 10 he formed a band known as The Falcons together with the late famous drummer, Jethro Shasha and Newton Kanengoni, who later joined the Harare Mambo band. After the Falcons, Fred Zindi and these two formed The Dot, a group which was joined by Maybin Mpili and Fari Safelo who later teamed up with Fungai Malianga to form the 2D Sounds band. After a while the band split up when Fungai, who had been at the then University of Rhodesia left for London to pursue further studies.

The relationship between the colonial settler regime's racism and the vagaries of black existence is also mentioned by Fred Zindi, in the same way Mudhara Wala references it in narrating his early experiences of being in Britain after leaving Rhodesia. As he expressed it:

> Due to the oppressive nature of the society then and a lack of opportunities after completing secondary education, I followed Fungai to London 3 years later and arrived on the 8th August, 1973, aged 20 years, also to further my studies.

As Fred had already played in several bands, as aforementioned, which included The Falcons, 2D Sounds and Pop Settlers while in Rhodesia, as soon as he arrived in London, he started looking for Fungai Malianga with the aim of starting a London-based Zimbabwean group. Here, the kinds of transnational connections and the

mobilities of music and bodies that follow a paradoxical escape from Rhodesia to Britain are apparent.

While in London, the music bug never left these two. Apart from separately pursuing degrees in mathematics, the pair formed a band known as Stars of Liberty. They roped in other Zimbabwean musicians, Cyprian Mandala on percussion, Nelson 'Dzungu' Magore on guitar and Davis Mhambi on drums. Every Friday night the Stars of Liberty were housed at a pub known as 'The Peacock' near the Angel underground station in Islington.

Here Zimbabweans began to trickle in every Friday as the band's repertoire included songs such as Zexie Manatsa's 'Chipo Chiroorwa', Thomas Mapfumo's 'Hokoyo' and The Pied Pipers' 'Amayo' together with the band's own compositions and some American R&B material. Eventually The Peacock became too small as the numbers swelled to hundreds every Friday. In addition to being regulars at The Peacock, the band was also invited to do the night club circuit in England, Wales and Scotland.

As Fred says, with Mhambi and Magore being unreliable members who failed to turn up for rehearsals when required, the band ended up with new London-based members who were from the Caribbean, namely Joy Welsh on vocals, Winston Kennedy on rhythm guitar and Roy MacClean on drums. The three original members that remained were Fungai, Cyprian and Fred, and they were briefly joined by Torera Fred Mupedzisi.

I met Torera Mupedzisi for the first time at another Zimbabwe research day in Oxford in 2013. It was my first of the several that were to follow, and I met the writer Petina Gappah there too, after having read her Guardian first book, the prize-winning collection of short stories, *Elegy for Easterly* (Gappah, 2009). There is a hilarious story in there about the Zimbabwean diaspora, deportability and return that is reminiscent of the story of Claudia Jones and her time in Britain. Perry has argued that Claudia Jones, a feminist activist and regarded as one of the founders of the Notting Hill Carnival, understood that nothing articulated ones' imperilled citizenship status more so than being subject to deportation (Perry, 2016). Jones had been deported from the United States of America before seeking asylum in Britain. Deportability essentially

abrogates the process of incorporating oneself as a citizen and ultimately marks ones' presence in a society as alien or criminal. Again, like Harare North, Gappah captures a variant of the precarities of migrant and diasporic existence for Zimbabweans in Britain.

I was also to meet Chipo Chung, an actor, who I had met at a Commonwealth event on Zimbabwe and Culture, in Bethnal Green a few days before. It was, the occasion, a collection of a motley of characters from different vantage points of being Zimbabwean, coming from different parts of the world, including Zimbabwe, for this research day in Oxford. It was, and remains, in a physical sense, a space that manifests transnationality, as well as the hierarchised ways in which borders are navigated amongst those in and of the diaspora. Not surprisingly, some who would have been expected to present on this occasion were absent due to visa issues.

*With Chipo Chung and the late Chenjerai Hove. I had met both Chipo and Chenjerai at a Commonwealth event on Zimbabwe, and we met again in Oxford for the annual Zimbabwe Research Day*

Nevertheless, Torera was playing the mbira for a group led by Linos Wengara Magaya, a Zimbabwean artist who plays the kinds of traditional sounds and rhythms that maybe Wala was referring to and encouraging younger Zimbabwean musicians to adopt, who provided entertainment after the research day was finished. In the three years of my attendance, that was the only time I was fortunate to experience Linos' music live, as well as any music at all at the research day, outside the presentation by JoAnne McGregor. I was to meet Torera at many other events I went together with Mudhara Wala, and he would tell me about his time in Zimbabwe and his work at the College of Music, and his musical experiences in Britain. I am making what seems like a slight detour here to emphasise how the field is as porous as the messy narratives that constitute the ethnography in translation, and how the field is already constituted, saturated by history and lived experiences that shape the present of the ethnographic encounter, and the present of the writing. The fragments of diaspora are brought to life in these glimpsed moments, of imagined homes and pasts, as well as shared historical and transnational connections that continue to seep in and out of the bounds of geography and time, and to inform the routes that musicking takes for Zimbabweans in London.

During the time that Fred was involved with the Stars of Liberty, he attended The Royal School of Music in London's Piccadilly area, where he studied reading and writing music on piano and guitar (up to Grade 5 level, as he made clear, and which I still do not understand, not being instructed in music in any way). Later in the late 1970s the group was joined by Louis Mhlanga who had just arrived from Zimbabwe and it changed its name to Shaka. Together, they recorded three albums entitled: 'Zimbabwe on Fire', 'Train of Freedom' and 'Africa.' The music from these three albums was entertaining while it was also educational and political. Most of the songs referred to the Zimbabwean situation and the rallying cry for freedom that had reached fever pitch as the liberation struggle raged, for example the song 'Power to The People', which is self-explanatory.

Louis Mhlanga has since become a significant name in Zimbabwean and South African music, after making his own transnational and musical journeys. A vivid, if not slightly blurry memory (because, you see, memory is treacherous and constantly re-invented) of one moment of seeing Louis Mhlanga perform is around 2009, or is it 2010, in

Brixton, Johannesburg. It was at a place called the House of Nsako, a dingy-in-a-cool-way sort of place, a place I usually went to with friends before or after a sojourn in Newtown; where different people met to talk about post-apartheid South Africa, the Palestinian question and other political issues of the day, and to also dance to the regular tunes of Salif Keita and Damian Marley (for a while, I would request from the DJ a song by Damian and Stephen Marley, The Mission).

I was to meet for the first time, then several voices in South African public spheres, David Coplan, the author of *In The Township Tonight; South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* and Andile Mgxitama, the Black Consciousness writer and activist who revived Steve Biko's New Frank Talk, amongst names and faces that may be recognisable in the 'public sphere' in South Africa today. Now those connections and routes, historical and transnational, are apparent here, in the two places and spaces I occupy simultaneously in this moment, of Paul Lunga In Brixton, London, blowing his horn and taking us down the stairs into the *shebeen* of Yvonne Vera's poetic weaving and Louis Mhlanga strumming his guitar in Brixton, Johannesburg, and recalling many Zimbabwean households and evenings with his piece 'International Rhumba', which was a soundtrack to a popular television talk show called Mai Chisamba, whose host has been dubbed the Oprah of Zimbabwe, in amusing, if not overstated ways. Again, one returns (hopefully not necessarily in the Freudian manner of the return of the repressed, and the uncanny), in exploring Zimbabwean being in Britain, to tracing those black footsteps in a concrete jungle, trying to pick up remnants of trumpets and guitar strings, shoe soles that have long been discarded into the heaving dustbins of London's contested memory, especially black memory, or memory of the black, most often to be invoked in the manner of Fred Motens argument on the fetishisation of black expression—or the hauntings of the ghost of multiculturalism.

Whenever the opportunity arose, Fred and the band would also perform at the Africa Centre in Covent Garden in the West End of London on Saturdays. The Africa Centre, as Fred highlighted, and as I have pointed out, was a place where Africans from all over the continent together with many from the Caribbean gathered every weekday.

Beyond revealing the historical formations of Zimbabwean political identities, the connections and musicking here are also testament to the place that music occupies

in the formations of migrant sociality, and the refusal of social death and abjection. The same Britain that confronted Wala, of racial tensions, and later the Brixton riots, was also the place and space in which these diasporic musical connections were being made, where Africans and those from the Caribbean as Gates has noted would come together to “own the night” (Gates, 1976).

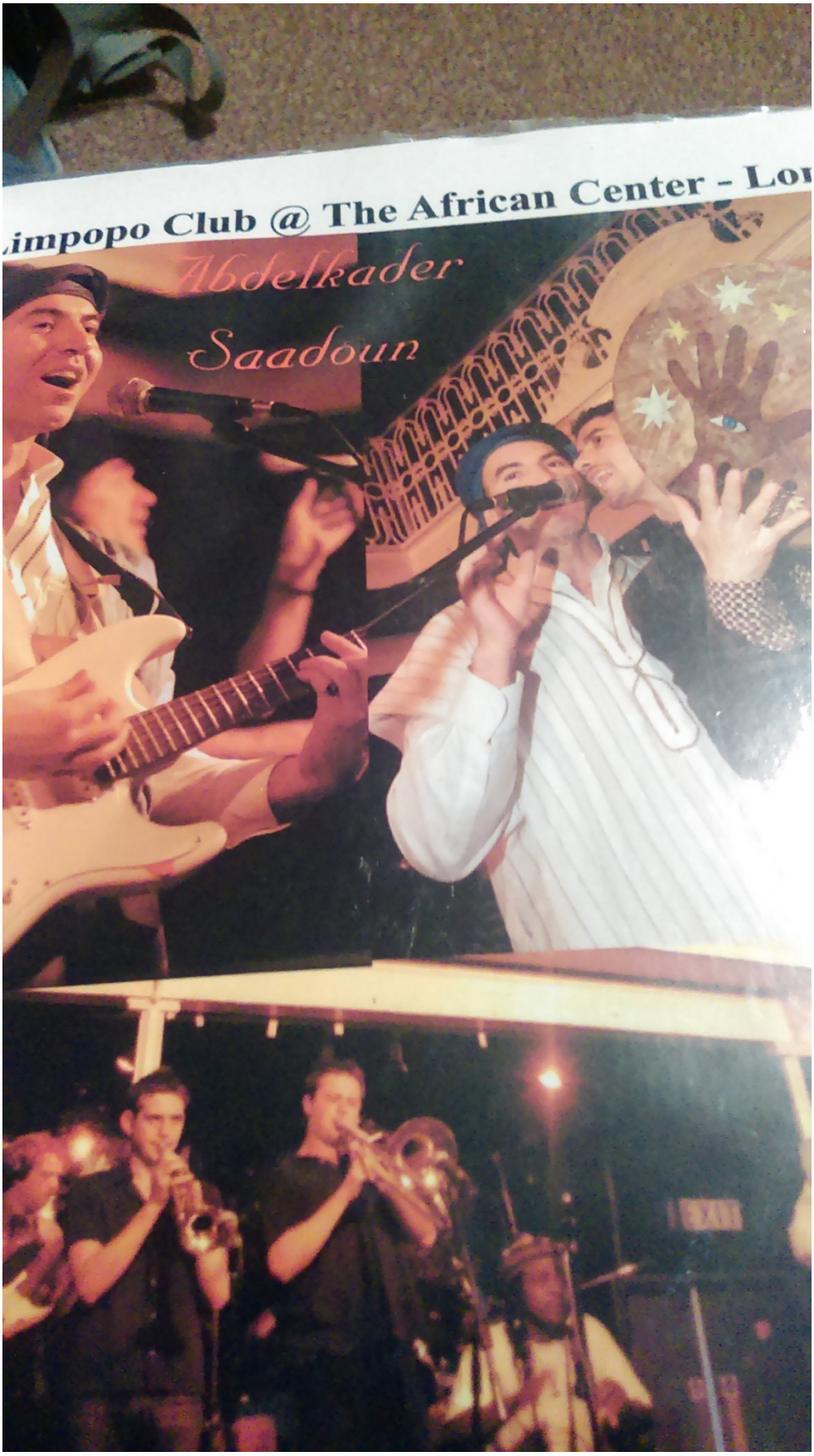
AFRICA CENTRE

38 King Street London WC2E 8JT

Telephone 01 836 1973

# Annual Report 1988-9

Charity No. 313510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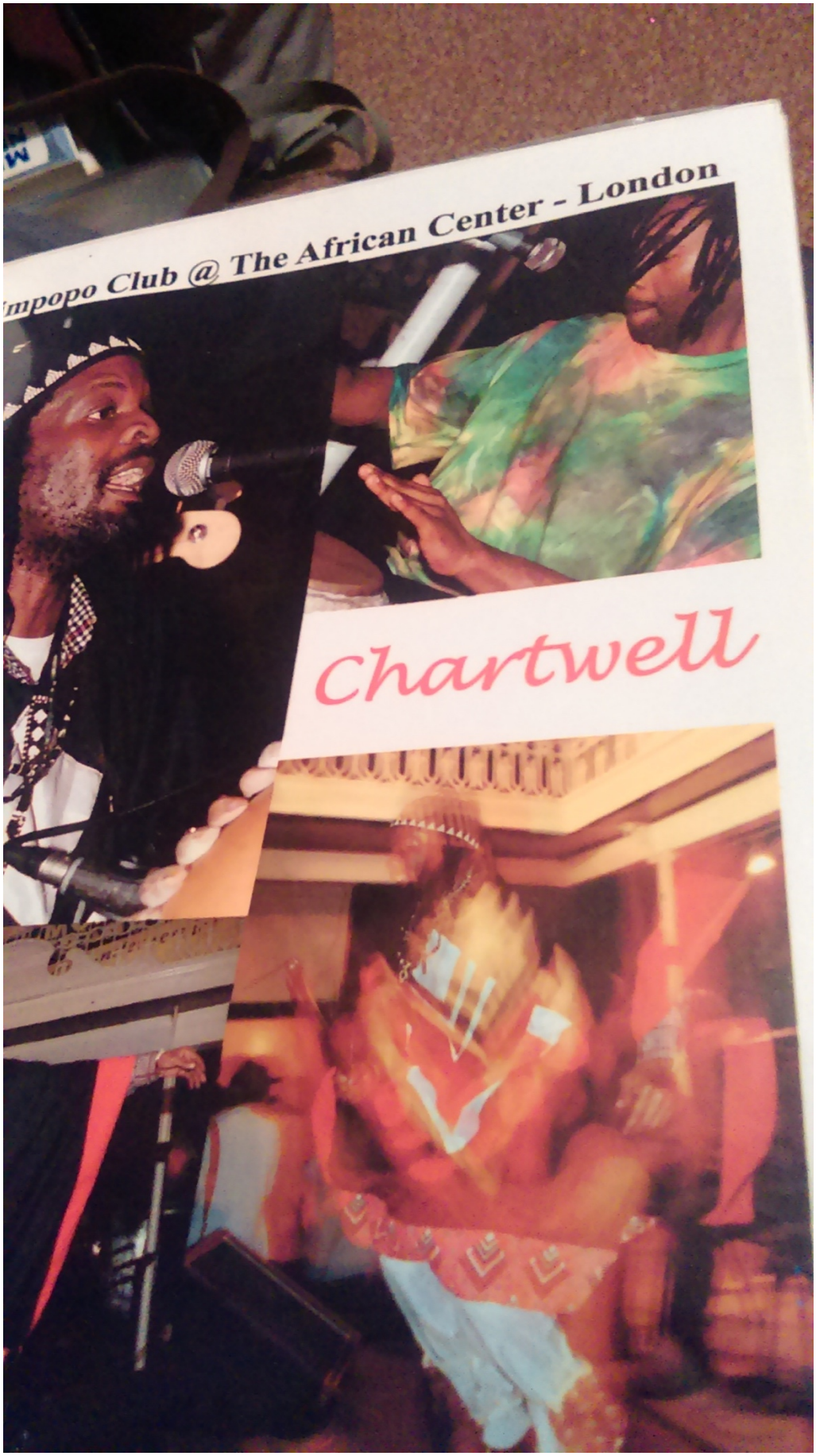
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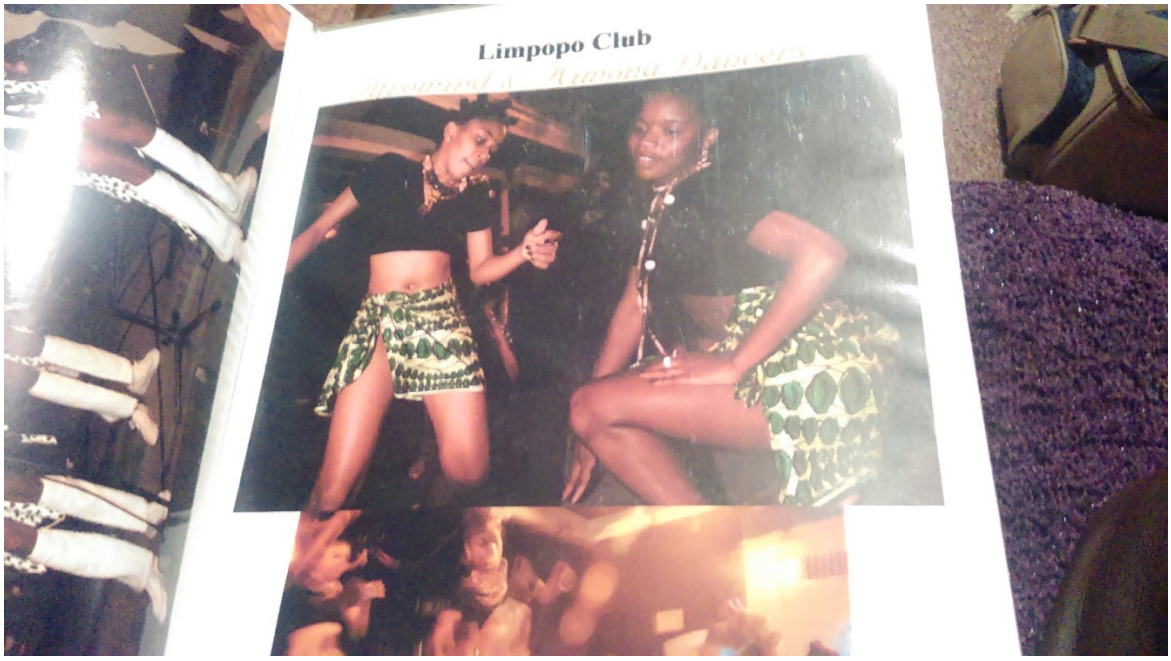
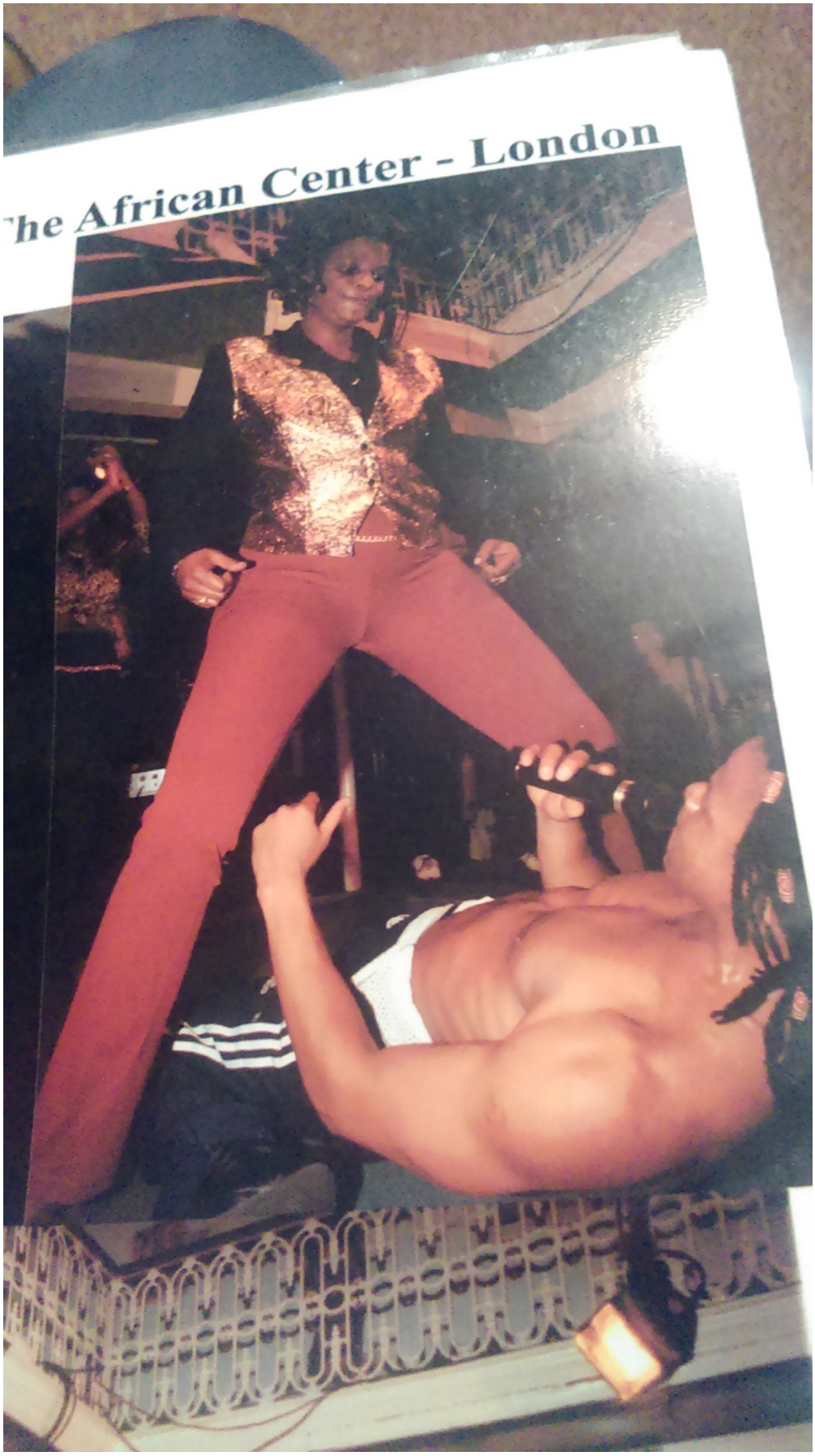
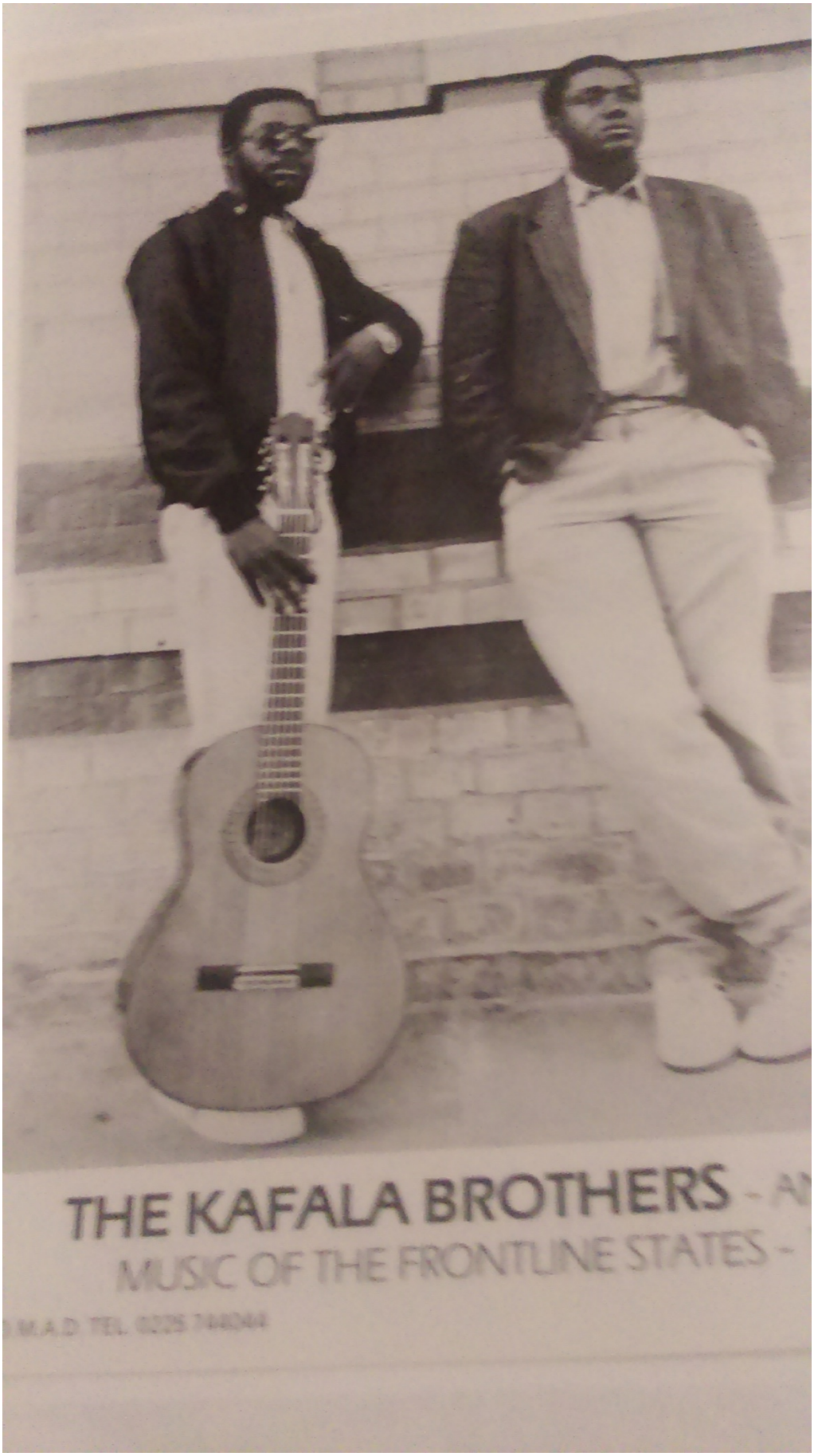
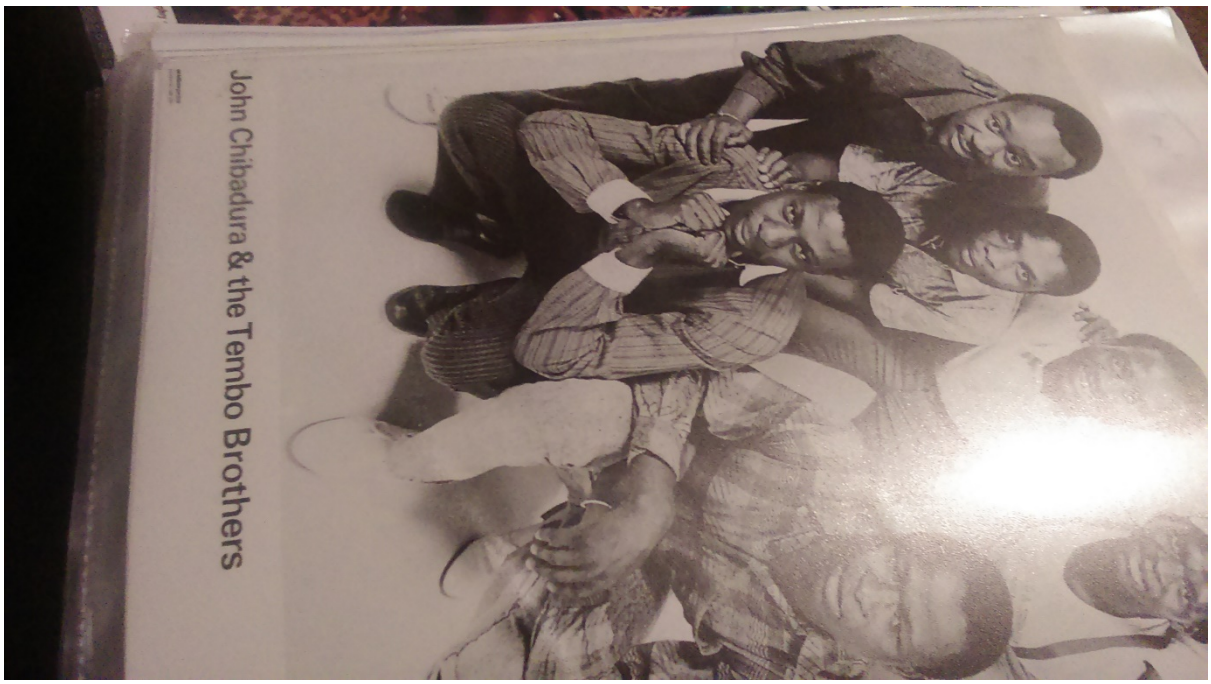

Limpopo Club


The African Center - London


THE KAFALA BROTHERS - A
MUSIC OF THE FRONTLINE STATES -




*Above is an old report from Africa Centre and some images of the times of Limpopo Club there that Mudhara Wala dug up for me. I include these images here as an example of the kinds of black conviviality, self-fashioning and performance that characterised the life of the old Africa Centre. These images also reveal the different African countries from which the bands came, with Zimbabwe present in the last image of John Chibadura and the Tembo Brothers.*

As we sat and talked over a cup of tea, and pored over the many posters, pictures and reports from Wala's personal archival material, his love for music and the relationship he had formed over the years with artists and promoters from different African countries were clear. In addition to the Africa Centre, many of the clubs and bars where these performances were held were now closed and transformed as the city and its cultures also shift. He had managed to tour with bands like John Chibadura and the Tembo Brothers when they were big in Zimbabwe, and to introduce them to a wider British audience. After the Bhundu Boys had opened up a space for Zimbabwean sounds as 'world music', many other Zimbabwean acts were to follow, with Wala firmly in the mix.

The frustration, Wala pointed out, was that there was no coherent narrative or public platform through which these stories of Zimbabwean presence could be told, overwhelmed by the Caribbean and West African representations, to show that it never had been, and still is not all about death, disease and suffering, but the coming together of different diasporas, with their concurrent narratives, to forge a sense of home and belonging, and whether momentary or enduring in their own ways,

identities that suggest community and conviviality and not abjection. This is what the musicking managed to do, and continues to do. Fortunately, I did not promise to be one such platform. I told him I would try. I would be similarly overwhelmed by the strictures of the logics of coloniality and epistemic violence that characterise intellectual projects, and even as I also work to resist abjection, remain subject to the kinds of social death that black bodies confront in the elsewhere. Although of different moments of departure and arrival, I felt that was something we shared with Wala, a recognition of the dangers of absences and invisibilities, and a recognition of the complexities of lived experience that ethnographic writing in this case mutilates in translation.

In his days navigating London, Fred adds, many Zimbabweans also used to gather at a pub called the Brownswood in Malet Street near the University of London. Here they would exchange political stories and social life events over a glass of beer. Fred would go there to advertise his band. His band was also invited to play at all ZANU PF functions organised in the UK, such as a fundraising event which took place at Camden Hall and raised £8,000. This event was organised by Peter Tatchell, a renowned gay rights activist and left wing political campaigner, who was to later have skirmishes with Robert Mugabe and become a virulent critic of ZANU PF, and especially Zimbabwe's (Robert Mugabe's to be specific) position on sexual rights.

The band also appeared on 'New Faces' a British television programme which introduced new bands. Appearing on such a programme was a sort of 'arrival', a recognition of Zimbabwean music(ians) and its representation in British popular culture. In a context, as highlighted by Malik, where there were tensions over representations of blackness on television, and the struggle over the meanings of blackness, the Stars of Liberty were featuring here in those genealogies of black struggle, belonging and identity negotiation in Britain.

In making his connections with Wala clear, and how they worked together in creating musical spaces for Zimbabweans and other Africans, Fred argues that by the time the band (Stars of Liberty) appeared on the television show, he,

> … had by now become the Social Secretary of the University of London's Institute of Education and was responsible for holding discos with assistance

from another Zimbabwean, Walton Dangarembizi [Mudhara Wala] every Thursday night at the University.

Using his position as Social Secretary at the Institute of Education, Fred also sourced gigs for his band and for the UK-based reggae group, Aswad. He managed at the time to secure about 16 gigs throughout British Universities, as he had established a network of University social secretaries who would meet in London every three months. He was also instrumental in getting Aswad to be the first black group to perform in what he calls "the sacrosanct" Royal Albert Hall in Kensington.

While in London, he also met lots of famous British and Jamaican friends who included Sir Paul McCartney, King Sounds, Dennis Brown, Don Carlos, David Hines of Steel Pulse, Freddie McGregor, Tony Rebel, Frankie Paul and many others. When he met another Zimbabwean, Clifford 'Chewaluza' Mataya, who introduced him to Sir Richard Branson, Fred tried to get a recording deal which failed to get through due to the unreliability of band members who did not show up for rehearsals. Apart from Clifford Mataya, there were not many Zimbabweans involved in playing music commercially in the UK. The other musician who was active at the time, was Zeke Manyika, who later joined a "white" rock band, Orange Juice, which was doing well in charts, apparently contributing to their biggest hit single, 'Rip It Up'.

In 1980, at Independence, Fred together with another Zimbabwean, Peter Chimukupete, got members of a reggae band from Southall called Misty In Roots to sing the then Zimbabwean National Anthem 'Ishe Komborera Africa' with a view to getting them to perform at the London independence celebrations at the Commonwealth Institute in Kensington and later in Zimbabwe after Bob Marley. On return to Zimbabwe after independence Fred brought with him the group Aswad and King Sounds who performed at Rufaro stadium in August, 1982. In a reciprocal move, Fred, just like Wala, was also responsible for the promotion of Zimbabwean bands overseas. Bands such as John Chibadura, The Real Sounds, Thomas Mapfumo, Lovemore Majaivana and many others, all benefitted from Fred's efforts of overseas tours as he took these to the UK and The Netherlands. During his stint in London while studying for a PhD in Psychology, Zindi wrote his first music book in 1985 entitled Roots Rocking in Zimbabwe, which sold out all the 5,000 copies within six months

On return from England, Fred went straight to the Zimbabwe College of Music and persuaded them to establish the Ethnomusicology programme where Simangaliso Tutani, Andrew Chakanyuka, Chris Chabuka, his old mate, Jethro Shasha, James Chimombe and Louis Mhlanga became the first teachers on this programme. It was during this period that Fred saw the need to write local music books. He wrote several titles such as *Music Ye Zimbabwe, Music for the People, Pop Music: Zimbabwe vs. the World* and *Music Guide for Zimbabwe, Volumes 1 and 2*, which all became useful resources at the College of Music as well as at Teachers' Colleges throughout Zimbabwe. His latest book, *Music Rocking Zimbabwe*, is a historical journey through Fred's experiences and the experiences of his contemporaries such as Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi, Bhundu Boys, John Chibadura, Lovemore Majaivana, Zexie Manatsa, Cool Crooners, Ephat Mujuru, Ilanga and many more.

Fred became a radio DJ in Zimbabwe in 1988 where he did the reggae session on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's Radio Three. He also established a sound system which went around the country entertaining patrons and successfully competed with the likes of Josh Makawa, Mike Mhundwa, Peter Johns and Fungai Marange, who were doing the same. At the same time, he formed the band Frontline Kids with whom he recorded five albums namely 'Children on The Frontline', 'African Jive', 'Hupenyu', 'Yarira Ngoma' and 'Creation. He also became the band manager between 1988 and 2003.

In the late 1980s, Fred went on a talent search within Harare and established The Frontline Kids Band of the 'Yarira Ngoma' fame. He also became active in many musical organisations which included The National Arts Council, ZIMURA amd The Musicians' Union. While at the National Arts Council, he introduced the concept of awarding musicians and other artists and this was accepted by the then director Charles Makari and the chairman, Professor Solomon Mutsvairo.

While at the College of Music, he became part of the team that formed UMOJA which identified musical and dancing talent in Zimbabwe. UMOJA is still active today and its products include Hope Masike, Osborne Matengenzara, Blessing Chimanga, Silent Nhendere, Raymond Tatenda Mupfumira, Farai Kuzvidza Eve Kawadza, Rutendo Machiridza, Donald Kanyuchi, Munya Matarutse, Mutsa Gudhlanga, Mangoma Moyo,

Maylene Chenjerai, MacIntosh Jerahuni and Tafadzwa Marova. Some of these musicians, like Munya Mataruse, have become part of Zimbabwean musicking in the elsewhere as they tour different countries and perform for Zimbabwean and non-Zimbabwean audiences alike.

What I hope this section has achieved, is to show the historical and continuing musical connections between Zimbabwe and the UK, as witnessed in the mobilities and circulations of Zimbabwean bodies, and of various kinds of musicking. The experiences of Fred Zindi show how, historically, musicians and music were moving between Zimbabwe and Britain, as well as to other countries. The presence of Zimbabweans in Britain also meant they performed not just 'Zimbabwean' music in any fixed way, but also adapted to the musical repertoires of Britain and the prevailing musical influences, as the case of Zeke Manyika and Orange Juice shows.

Against a departure from a colonial regime where black abjection was imposed and resisted, Zindi, Wala and other Zimbabweans arrived and lived in a Britain that was certainly not Rhodesia, but riddled with its own tensions. The musical venues of London became a rallying point where the different iterations of the African diaspora congregated and conveyed socio-political hopes and frustrations, joy, love, sadness and a whole other myriad of emotions that affect and were affected by life in the elsewhere and longings for the mythic home of yore.

## Sanganai Bar: Conviviality and The Play at Belonging

Around October of 2012, almost a month after I had arrived in London, a friend in Australia wrote to introduce me to "A Zimbabwean guy" they had studied at Cambridge with, Sam, who eventually became a friend to me. After writing to Sam and trying to organise a meet-up, I happened to bump into him by coincidence (providence?) over half a year later, around June of 2013.

**At Sanganai Bar with some friends from SOAS, as were watched over by the Buffalo head behind!**

Still finding my feet in London, (one could stay one never fully finds one's feet, in the always almost way of Hanif Kureishi's The Buddha of Surbabia), and as part of the ever-present attempt at locating the African and making place in the midst of dispersion, in the collective, as well as of self, I had decided to attend the Royal African Society's Annual Lecture, delivered in 2013 by Dr Nkosazana Dhlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. As I walked briskly into the Royal Society of Medicine on Wimpole Street, where the lecture was being held, after getting lost and being a bit flustered and sweaty, I saw this face that I thought I recognised from (the invasive, and pervasive) Facebook, and as my fortune would have it, this was the Sam I had been trying to meet for months!

So, we sat through and endured the lecture, mostly because, as we were to later discuss, we recognise the familiar platitudes about Africa, and from Africanists, that characterised many such events, and wondered why we still attended them. In Shona, they say *kwadzinorohwa matumbu ndokwadzinomhanyira*. We are the case of the burnt child that still does not dread fire! Sam was dressed in what I was to also recognise as his signature style: blue jeans, a white shirt and some form of formal shoe or other, with a well combed almost-afro. He was one of many to emphasise to me the importance of 'looking good' and having a 'good image', especially after we had witnessed some young black men getting stopped and searched by the police in

Shepherd's Bush. I understand well, and still am mystified, by this notion of black bodies and respectability.

We went for some drinks at a nearby pub whose name I forget, where I was shocked by the price of a pint, and discovered we had both attended the University of Zimbabwe, knew some people in common, and a camaraderie was born, which led me to being invited to Sanganai bar, at Zimbabwe House, the Friday of that week, and many other Fridays to come. Sam, having been in Britain for over a decade, was now 'a lad' of some sort, and knew a few corners and crevices of the city that we could squeeze into, for a 'good', though not often affordable time. To say corners and crevices is to misname our difference in taste, as Sam had proclivities for the smooth and shiny, whilst I was accused of having the 'SOAS' tendencies for the gritty and grimy. I tried to not associate his tendencies to his British experiences!

He became a bigger brother of some sort, and having a deeper pocket than I, the eternally broke student, would often make sure that I staggered out of many establishments, on his goodwill. I had to see it as goodwill, of course, to assuage the guilt. Who wants to be a burden in London, living precariously in the age of austerity? On many occasions, he had to drive me to and from mainly Zimbabwean barbecues, and constantly gave advice on how to survive in the 'belly of the beast'. There was, between us, an understanding that he was older, had more experience of Britain, of London, and even in his language, calling me *mupfanha* and I calling him *mukoma*— the expressions and signifiers of respect, seniority and authority were (re)inscribed, recollecting the ways in which younger men and older men relate in Zimbabwe, and amongst some Zimbabweans in Britain.

I am reminded of a similar relationship that obtains in Sam Selvon's *Lonely Londoners*, between Moses, who has been a resident of London for a while, and Galahad, who has just arrived from the Caribbean, yet acts as if he knows it all, only to revert to asking for help from Moses who revels in his 'been to' status(Selvon, 2014). My experiences, at least from that position, are not that surprising, or exceptional, and these forms of a diasporic (age) hierarchy of belonging were reproduced in many other episodes.

One time, I was admonished by Sam, after we had walked all over Old Street and

Shoreditch looking for a place to have a beer, and he was not satisfied with most of the places I suggested, of those I knew of. He told me in no uncertain terms that as a younger Zimbabwean and as someone new to London, I should not be forward in suggesting what to do, but let him take the lead. My attempts at feeble resistance and the image of that counter-hegemonic Zimbabwean diasporic masculinity whimpered, put its tail between its legs, and got on the train towards a 'better place'. We ended up at the end of the Central Line, at some thatched place that was supposed to be 'authentically African' that I never went back to again. It was too far, and had not turned out to be much better anyway. In the end, not-so-good choices had been made, regardless of age and the amount of time spent in London!

Some months later, I was to find myself with a group of older Zimbabweans, who, amongst them, have over half a century of time spent in Britain, at the Kilburn Festival, in Kilburn Park. The musical performances and culinary instances that highlighted the entwinement of the Zimbabwean diasporic experience to a wider Afro-Caribbean and black being in Britain, are elucidated elsewhere. I bring the Kilburn Festival to the fore here because there is an instance there that relates to my relationship with Sam. When the proceedings of the festival were done, we ended up at a nearby pub, as often happened.

The conversation was dominated by Chenjerai and Frank, who were relating their time in London, and Frank emphasising how the 'white man' had wanted to section him, according to him, as they had tried to do to Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera during his time in Britain, apparently because of his 'anti-establishment' views and his attempt to burn a library at University of Oxford, amongst other acts that would have suggested he needed institutionalisation. I would later be regaled by stories of how he met Marechera and the tales that came with holding views branded as radical and anti-establishment positions in the 1980s.

Frank had chained his bicycle outside the pub, and decided we should sit outside so he could keep an eye on it. As soon as we were sat, a young 'mixed race' man almost leaned on Franks bicycle (from the position where I sat, that is how I had seen it), and for some reason Frank lost it, and told him to fuck off, away from his bicycle. An argument ensued in which sentiments around what Frank termed the "confusions" of

being mixed race, issues around sexuality, and the "white friends" the young man was with were expressed. In the end, when peace had been re-established and I was trying to share my views, Frank called me a *mafikizolo*, suggesting that I had no legitimacy to say anything and that I did not know, or understand the ways of dealing with 'these people' of a 'dubious' belonging and sexuality. "*Ukavasiya vanoenderera"* ("you have to show them that you don't tolerate nonsense"), Frank said, downing his Guinness, and casting a severe glance at the group and the offending young man who seemed to be smarting from the verbal lashing. Chenjerai tried to come to my defence, insisting that Frank was just stirring trouble, and that as a black man, he should not invite further scrutiny, or invite the attentions of the police. I could know a lot about Britain, he said, and besides, I had lived in Johannesburg, which was similarly cosmopolitan, in a still fairly racist South Africa.

The conversation reverted back to being largely between Chenjerai and Frank, about the times they had been to South Africa, the friends and relatives there, and a multitude of opinions and experiences. Besides the apparent transnational and metropolitan connections between London and Johannesburg that were being brought up, I was once again, I felt, subject to a hierarchy of belonging, a young Zimbabwean man, learning to walk the tight ropes of (racial) existence in London, and being initiated into some of the rituals of confrontation and threats and symbolic violence, in practice and the language and grammars of owning and making space and place yours by making them know "you don't tolerate nonsense". It is in the context of such relationships, among men, that I come to certain aspects about the Sanganai experience. Experiencing space and place as one, with and through initially and predominantly Zimbabwean men, thus colours this narrative.

Sanganai is Shona for meet, or come together. In name, it is already a nod to the kinds of conviviality and negotiations of dislocation and abjection that come with the elsewhere. It already suggests a coming together that rejects being alone, a welcoming and a construction of home. Sanganai inscribes into the place a sociation befitting of the way music mediates the relationships, 'inside and outside' and in the interstices. Sanganai is a bar in the basement of Zimbabwe House on The Strand, just across the road from Charing Cross Station and close to Trafalgar Square. It is an often-busy area, with the homeless and those suffering a version of dislocation and precarity in the city

lining up for food outside the embassy on the Friday evenings I have been there. It has (Zimbabwe House, and the immediate space outside it) in recent years been known by many for anti-Mugabe and ZANU-PF vigil protests every Saturday, called the Zimbabwe Vigil, characterised by song and dance. I expressly avoided this overtly politicised space in my misguided notion that I was escaping the polarised politicisation that had occurred in the past decade in Zimbabwe, and that my study was not about politics or political music, and trying to go beyond Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean bodies as spectacle. It turns out this is an inescapable and pervasive aspect when one inhabits a certain body, which embeds itself in a politics of being and belonging even before those who inhabit the body awake to that version of reality. In some ways, I did escape, but as recent political events I have alluded to show, overt, or covert, politics in its many guises remains ubiquitous.

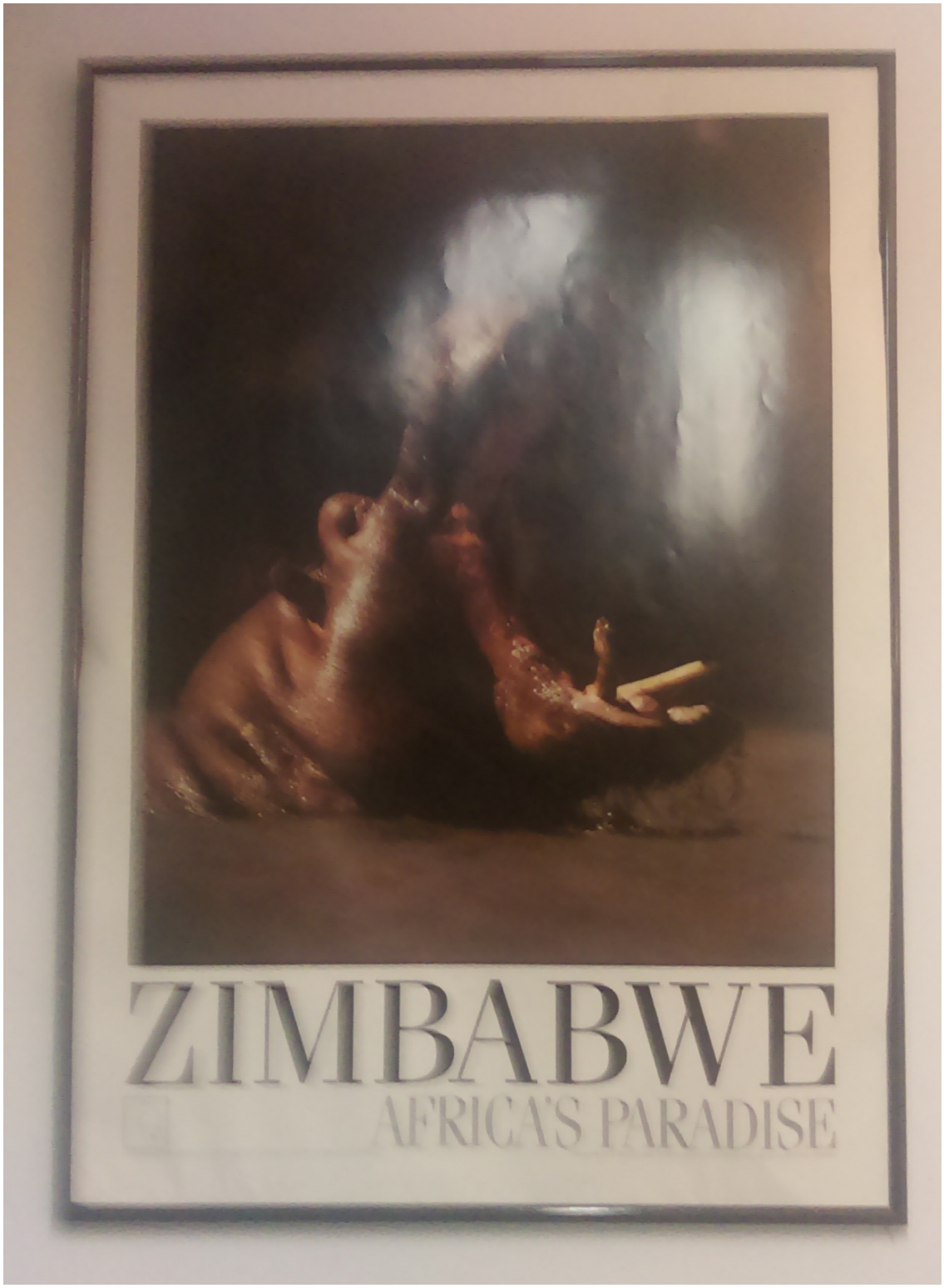
The state of Sanganai bar suggests age, time, the many bodies and many stories that can be peeled off its walls and gleaned in the wearing threads of the carpet on the floor. It has been in use for a while. As one of the DJs had told me, he had been patronising the place for over a decade. He had come to Britain during a school's athletics programme in the '90s, before Zimbabwe went into the throes of demise, decided to stay, and had been here ever since. He had witnessed the changes in the character and tone of the space, especially as more Zimbabweans came to Britain after 2000.

One walks in, after pressing the bell at the door, and signs in their name and contact details with the old man at the door, John. I never called him by name. He would often ask me where I am from in Zimbabwe, and after I had grown my hair, used to ask me if he could buy me a comb, so I could look "like a gentleman" much like Sam, maybe or why I could not just shave my hair. Apparently said in jest, I was to also find out what was, and remains for me that discomforting tendency from some of the older men to fuss over my appearance, insisting that this "society wants respectable young black men" and that the way I was presenting myself would limit my opportunities and offer a somewhat negative image. One might imagine I have overplayed these manifestations, though seemingly fickle, of a hierachised interest in (black) collective self-image and representation, and expressions of concern. I wondered why my

choice of being, as a *mafikizolo*, should matter much, or be as affecting, unless as part of internalised ways of policing the black body.

Was it care and concern, (re)establishing a language of and around respectability and seniority, or an actual understanding of having inhabited bodies that demand certain forms of (re)presentation and respectability? Interestingly, another person who fussed so much about my appearance was a Zimbabwean friend I made during this time, (openly gay being emphasised here because of the tensions around an acknowledged homosexual identity, even amidst a history of homo-sociality and institutionalised, performative and contingent (homo) sexualities, as argued by Marc Epprecht, for instance (Epprecht, 2013)) who, after I had watched one of his theatre performances at the Young Vic, laconically, with a hint of sarcasm, said to me I should dress well " because you represent us Zimbabweans", this said whilst he straightened my collar and winked at a friend who was nearby. "Us Zimbabweans" came with an edge, a suggestion of the fragmentary existences of a supposedly unitary identity, Zimbabwean, which excludes and threatens social and physical death in some instances, for people like him. Which section of this Zimbabwe was I supposed to represent well?

After walking down the stairs to the bar in the basement, one is met with framed images of a herd of elephants, another of the Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya), captioned with the words *Zimbabwe, Africa's Paradise*, a testament to days, and wishes materially in the past, and maybe as future possibility. It is a paradox that what can be regarded as remnants, yet testaments, to a coloniality, is this pictorial emphasis on the animals, the nature of Zimbabwe, reminiscent of the relationship between the settler and 'nature'. It is this 'land' that finds Zimbabwe in soured relations with Britain, the nature that many Zimbabweans can now only see in such age-old images, which are also constitutive of an imagined home and hope. It was also ironic, or rather symbolic, in the context of the setup, of memory and of existence in the in-between of Zimbabwe and Britain, to be met with the image of a herd of elephants.




*One of the images of the "Big Five", and the ironies of Africa's Paradise*

Upon entering, I would usually immediately walk towards Sam who, on many occasions, would already be at the bar as he left work early on Fridays, or I would go and greet the older men I know first, meet some new people, ask after their health and get into a discussion on some current affairs and politics in Zimbabwe, before getting

a drink and the traditional staple Zimbabwean food, *sadza*, which is also served in a kitchen the bar.

Sanganai is the place that opened up opportunities for the friendships that led me to many events, and to a better understanding of part (since all attempts at knowing are partial) of the Zimbabwean lived and musical experience, especially Mudhara Wala. It was difficult to get a precise date of when the place had opened up to the wider Zimbabwean community, but Mudhara Wala suggested he recollected starting to frequent the place in the early '90s. The DJ who had stayed after the athletics trip mentioned that he had started playing music at the bar around 1999. With the arrival of more Zimbabweans in Britain after 2000, and the later frequency of protests as the socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe declined, the embassy became a focal point, for those who wanted to express their displeasure at the Zimbabwean government, or those who just wanted to grab a drink and have a chat with other Zimbabweans in the basement.

One of the first things that struck me the first time I walked into Sanganai Bar, and many other times later, was how there were virtually no women at all. Sam would say to me that it was a place for mostly older men, and for, "guys to chill and discuss the politics 'at home'". So 'the guys' would discuss, against the background of seldom subtle or low music, impending elections in Zimbabwe, some recent political occurrence, or just bemoan, as usual, the absence of any women in the place. Sometimes the arguments got heated and Sam was once told by one vociferously nationalist 'diasporan' that his analyses of what was happening in Zimbabwe towards the elections of 2013 was a betrayal of his Oxford and Cambridge credentials. He left the conversation to get a drink, pulled a stool and came to sit next to me. The old man was beginning to rain spit in my face, he said smiling. I smiled back. If I was *mupfanha,* a colloquial term for younger brother, to Sam, then he was the same to the old man who had made him leave the conversations. The struggle with some ambiguous hierarchies is that one never really knows on what basis they will be lashed or forced into some kind of submission. At least Sam felt he had done it for his own dignity, and would not stoop so low to engage in a face spitting contest!

One aspect Sanganai centres is the ramifications of what I regard as 'musical spaces and places' and the grammars and experiences that are obtained therein, all of which I refer to as musicking. I will reiterate here from George, who has argued that listening to people (making) music is a way to listen in on the making of social relationships. Music does not transcend the strains of social life, but as a set of practices tuned to and tuned by the flux and flow of human relationships, it is necessarily bound to them (George, 1993). Another point is about the metaphorical aspects around music and the song, and the ways in which the soundtracks of and accompanying these experiences in Sanganai are present as played or performed in the moment, as a temporal element, as well as being present in non-linear and not necessarily corporeal ways which enmesh time and narrative in ways that make the musicality of the lived, and the converse, experientially and affectively inseparable.

Even as I write of walking in and looking at the space, and greeting, and drinking and eating, and the music in the background, of the conversations with 'the guys' and the loud music in the fore, rather than background as I said, simultaneity, and similarly absence, in many ways define the experiences. I am aware of the absence of women, which is an absence that is reiterated through conversation with the (older) men present, also heightens my awareness of the male-male encounters, as well as disciplining the resultant interactions in ways that produce an intercalary being, amongst men, and outside the ambits of an understanding of belonging as young, and a *mafikizolo*.

On this note, I must pay specific attention to examples of the music played in Sanganai, and the way it interacts with those present in constructions of space and sonic lineages of politics and memory. There is a 'sound system' in the basement and on many nights, there would be a couple of DJs, including the former athlete, playing mostly Zimbabwean music off the laptops they brought. On other nights when they did not show up, or before they showed up, someone would just plug in their phone and play their selection of music. Older music such as 'Nyoka Musango' from Thomas Mapfumo, 'Ndibvumbamirewo' by Marshal Munhumumwe and the Four Brothers or 'Tozeza' Baba by Oliver Mtukudzi were regular songs, and would rouse most people to the 'dance floor' which is basically a small section of the bar where there is some space. These songs seemed to receive appreciation from the older Mudhara Wala

generation who came to Britain in the '70s and '80s, as well as the younger generation, people like me, invested in the music and relating to it in our own ways.

As one friend told me, "We never realised how rich our music was, until we came to the UK". As Wade argues, music defines, represents, symbolises, expresses, constructs, mobilises, incites, controls, transforms, unites, and so much more (Wade, 2004). These songs also got the older and younger women who would rarely patronise the bar on their feet. Some of the songs took my mind back to those dusty roads of the village (that I also reference in the conversation with Mudhara Wala, as part of memory and re-membering the present) I traversed with my late grandmother in early post-independence Zimbabwe, days when the 'growth points' of the rural shopping centres, named after modernisation theory and the (neoliberal?) economic structural adjustment programmes, were a thing, and I would often plead to go there, especially during independence celebrations, so I could dance to Thomas Mapfumo, and Simon Chimbetu, and eat, in large quantities, small colourful sweets we called 'viscose'.

When these songs were played, they would sometimes be accompanied by small anecdotes referring to "*zvinhu pazvanga zvakanaka muZimbabwe*", when things were good in Zimbabwe. The musical journey on a night could move from Thomas Mapfumo's 'Pemberai' and Marshall Munhumumwe's 'Makorokoto', encouragements for the celebration of Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980, from the latter's calling for the *gwenyambira's*—those who play the mbira—to come and rejoice, and Mapfumo's acknowledging that "*tanga tayaura*" (we had suffered a lot under colonial rule), but now "*tayaruka*" and "*takuzvitonga*" (we have grown up and matured, and are a sovereign people governing themselves). I have heard some say music has the capacity to transport one elsewhere, away from the everyday, yet in this instance, I felt that the music merged present, and past or imagined 'everydays', one shaped by the body and being elsewhere, a form of exile, and the other, by memory, and the body similarly being elsewhere, a simultaneous experience of time, and sound, and existence.

Certainly, the paradox of reminiscing on a past Zimbabwe in a basement in London is not lost. Whatever celebratory vestiges of 'independence' evoked by some of these

songs evaporate in the circumstances of the presence of some of these men, and women in Britain, in the lyrics of later songs by Thomas Mapfumo, who moves from a celebrated nationalist Chimurenga musician, to an exile, protesting the corruption and general deficit in post-independence Zimbabwe, a deficit which has seen many of us becoming, not the tourists or travellers of the global imaginary, but (conceptual) vagabonds that consistently sit on the margins, as lived, and as articulated in the dominant representations, historical and present, of the 'migrant' and the black (African/male) body.

A colleague remarked once, having been invited to Sanganai Bar, it was "fascinating… to see older black men dance… I do not see many older men dance where I come from". Which I did not imagine to be another planet! Sanganai is not necessarily a space of abjection (subjection), yet it brings out, through the songs and conversation, the ironies that accompany a place that becomes a rallying point for Zimbabweans and the contradictions that come with being part of a fractured and emergent diasporic community, as well as a fractured place of imagined origin. From moving to the celebratory rhythms of a then nascent and promising Zimbabwe, other songs would sound a metaphoric invocation and call for guidance and protection, in the 'dangerous forests' of migrant existence. Songs such as Mapfumo's 'Nyoka Musango' and Munhumumwe's 'Ndibvumbamireiwo' lyrically detail the challenges, and can be read textually as tropes for the kinds of resilience needed to inhabit these spaces. In 'Ndibvumbamireiwo', part of the song says, literally translated:

*Ndipe uta hwangu, nditambe navo kani* (Pass me my bow, so I can play with them)
*Ndipe Pfumo rangu, nhasi zvapera* (Pass me my spear, this ends today)
*…*
*Pandinofamba, ndibvumbamireiwo* (Protect me where I walk)
*…*
*Ndimi munoona zvatisingaone* (You are the ones who see what we cannot)
…
*Pandinofamba dzivisai zvakaipa* (When I walk, protect me from misfortune)

This song, like many others, constructs the motif of the journey and travel, through walking. Evocative of the biblical "though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death", the voice of the poem-like lyrical narrative asks for their weapons to face the

dangers of the journey, whilst at the same time asking *varikumhepo*, those gone before us, in the spirit world, for protection; the way a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings. The battle-ready narrator, who one assumes to be male given the gendered ownership and use of the means or tools of violence in the context indexed by the song, however, also asks the ancestors, in the same song, to soften the hearts of his enemies, so that they are kind and forgiving. It seems to be an acknowledgement that the challenges will not be easily transcended.

As one listens, and watches, some of the men in the bar bend their heads, shuffle their feet, repeat the motions, whistle and clap, the way people clap during rituals and traditional religious occasions as signs of respect; it is difficult to not marvel at how such a song, composed elsewhere, defies time and place to encapsulate some of the vagaries of Zimbabwean life in Britain. One cannot be always sure, however, if some are also not asking for protection from the viciousness of what would be called "home", the place they left for the very same Britain!

One Rick Ross (an American hip-hop artist) look-alike was a regular at hogging the amplifier and keeping his phone there as if his selection of music was always the best. He was usually the most likely to play pop and hip-hop that would get many just standing and staring, or murmuring disapproval and asking for different music. Some would ask why they come to a Zimbabwean bar to listen to American music, yet they would dance to South African, Congolese or Nigerian music when played. Besides the obvious age/intergenerational tastes, I would get the sense, from the reactions to music, and conversation, that Sanganai is also a space others want to construct as pan-African, as witnessed by the different patrons from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Ghana, among other countries, who would pass through the place. After exchanging a few words in my virtually non-existent Swahili with a Kenyan guy I usually saw, at the urinary in the bar's toilet (the best place for a conversation) we talked about 'Sina Makosa' by Les Wenyika and how it had been a big hit in Zimbabwe, remixed by a group called Diamond Musica, Congolese, but resident in Zimbabwe at the time of the remix. We also talked about Ngugi Wa Miri, the Kenyan writer who wrote *I Will Marry When I Want* with Ngugi Wa Thiongo. Wa Miri had been exiled to, and died in, Zimbabwe. We could not resist the politics, remarking at the many parallels between Kenya and Zimbabwe; but realising we needed to wash our hands

and get out of the toilet, the Kenyan said to me, "you just need to get a Kenyan woman, you will learn faster", to which I replied "why don't you invite any?" He just laughed, washed his hands and left. Akin to many other men in the bar, he never did.

As for the Rick Ross look-alike, when I could be bothered, I would just go and whisper in his ear nicely for a change of music because I had a dancing stake in it, and he would drunkenly squint his eyes through his spectacles, and then hug me, telling me that I was free to change the music and put on what I liked. After which he was likely to just stand there and continue moving to his selection of music. When Mudhara Wala chose to play, it would be some Misty and Roots, or Salif Keita, or some Zimbabwean music, but it was sure to be something he would call 'Pan African'. It certainly is about the time that Mudhara Wala has spent in London as part of a wider African diaspora, running the Limpopo Club at the Africa Centre and bringing many Zimbabwean and Afro-Caribbean artists and music into various spaces in Britain.

Many Zimbabwean songs would get people saying "*iyi inondifungisa kure*" ("this one makes me think of faraway places"), in reference to the memories and moments evoked by songs, at a time when someone was in Zimbabwe, or of a specific event or occasion. This is what Sarah Cohen, in her already cited study of immigrant Jews in Liverpool, argues that the consumption and production of music also draws people together and symbolises their sense of collectivity and place. It also brings into relief the observation by Jazeel that musical practice carves spaces of performance, expression and culture, and how it shapes social spaces of identity, belonging and community (Cohen, 1995; Jazeel, 2005). The geography of the imagination is aroused within the confines of a basement, taking these people, dancing and listening, into spaces of reminiscence and nostalgia, whilst also affirming a sense of place and belonging in the here and the now, a contingent present.

Political songs also found their space, especially post-independent ZANU PF electoral jingles that were sometimes played, although this was on occasion. Although political conversations took place, I must say I was fortunate to not witness any particularly vicious or violent encounters, and Sanganai has been open to Zimbabweans and non-Zimbabweans alike. I got to take some friends from SOAS and other places, for a taste

of some food and Zimbabwean music, and a fairly 'androcentric' space. They left with differing opinions of the place.

The women I first met, as Mudhara Wala later told me, were the older women that they had grown up together with, one of whom turned out to be the mother to a prominent singer, who I was to meet (the mother) later many times, as well as seeing her daughter perform, and having some funny conversations with her. In an encounter with one of the patrons of Sanganai, who was one of the few who came with his girlfriend, I was informed of how some of his female friends had established the bar as an undesirable zone, because they "felt treated like pieces of meat" as he put it. Another female friend said there was "too much sausage" in the bar that she did not feel comfortable with the way men looked at her and generally acted in the presence of women. Even the one time I went with my gay, fashion-policing Zimbabwean friend to the bar, he intimated that he was not as comfortable, because of some of the heteronormative (often homophobic) views expressed, to make his sexuality known, as well as because of the hegemonic notions of masculinity and what it means to be a 'Zimbabwean man'.

I witnessed several instances of intoxication, where some men would aggressively, or what seemed aggressive to me, pull some of the women present, or talk, slobbering in their faces. One does not want to assume that all women who came into the bar were made uncomfortable by this, yet the general observation I made was that the space lent itself to a certain kind of possession and intoxicated overbearing performance of masculinity, that could leer, and as Netsai jokingly said, act as if it has not seen a woman in a century. Was this because their 'good women stay at home'?

Another friend, Malvin, pointed out that most of his female friends who had come once had found the male gaze a bit discomforting, with the space being aesthetically unappealing. In the opinion of one Ugandan, the 'architecture' of the place was not inviting to women. In addition, he said, and I laughed, "they did not serve cocktails", having only beer, whiskey and wine, so why would I, or anyone imagine that women would want to come to a place that does not serve cocktails? I managed a smile and said I was learning. A vehement tall man with a sizeable nose (the nose was impressive!) who had been listening to the conversation towered over us and said,

after I had elicited his opinion, "A good woman should stay at home. This is a space for us to discuss politics and football and other issues that are not interesting to women. Zimbabwean women have their own spaces anyway. They can go to church. And don't think that they are just going to church. That is where they also meet other women and discuss what they want. They actually prefer going to church than coming here".

He was adamant that he had no reason to bring his girlfriend here, and that there was a danger that being in the diaspora, people were losing their 'Zimbabwean values' growing between two cultures. A certain logic of respectable femininity, a corollary of what Dominic Pasura has called respectable masculinity in the diaspora, seems to also pervade the space of the bar (Pasura, 2008; Pasura, 2014). These ideas of respectability also pervade the space of the church and religious musicking. Many young women coming in would call the older man at the reception 'uncle' whilst young men like me just called him 'mudhara' like I called many other older men such as Mudhara Wala, who I could not just call by name.

Pasura utilises Connell's understanding of hegemonic masculinity and the kinds of alternative masculinities that may be subordinate or marginal, making masculinity provisional, plural and situated (Connell, 1995). In the cases Pasura sites, it is evident that shifting gender roles have unsettled men and their relationships to power and authority in the diaspora. In a migrant context where women are earning more money, they are gaining more financial control and independence. Against the background of privileged masculinities back home in Zimbabwe, Pasura observes that some men find it difficult to accept the new realities in which their previous sense of power collapses. Pasura provides an important understanding of the new kinds of bordering and disciplining that gender relations confront in this elsewhere. One of his respondents informed him that in the diaspora, married women are perceived as the equivalent of the Home Office, who have the power and authority to issue 'visas' to their husbands to go out and engage in forms of conviviality.

In moments where I had to leave a bar or event early, I could not understand at first why there was reference to me being on a student visa. Without a sense of irony, I just assumed it was a reference to my being a student in some misplaced way, until it was

explained in a talk in Oxford by Pasura. There are, it appears, different kinds of drinking alcohol visas that men have to bargain for (Pasura, 2014).

> As well as being spaces to describe shared stories of vulnerabilities among men, interactional fields, interactional spaces such as pubs and gochi-gochis give men a temporary escape from changing gendered relations and roles in their everyday life (p.78-79).

In a sense, the way the men in Sanganai imagine themselves and the space they are in is similar to what Pasura recognises with the gochi-gochis, as being sites of emotive and romantic ties that invoke homeland sites such as KwaMereki and kwaMushandirapamwe[18], predominantly male sites of sociality where hegemonic ideas of being a Zimbabwean man are enacted and negotiated. In recognising the valency of Sanganai as a musicking place and space, the performance of diasporic being by some of these men, and their ideas on respectability, become spaces where, through shared nostalgic stories and myths of home, the past is somewhat reclaimed to make sense of the present and seek to establish a veneer of continuity.

Yet, in moments of intoxication and musical reverie, some of these 'Zimbabwean cultural' tenets seemed to dissolve, becoming contingent on the levels of intoxication, the music played, or the willingness of the participants in the performance to bend and negotiate whatever norms govern gendered practice, or perception. This was especially so in the younger woman and older man dynamic. I particularly felt for one South African young woman I had occasion to talk to. We established where in South Africa we had spent time in in common and the rest of small talk niceties. By the end of the evening, her walk to and from the bathroom would be defined by constant stops to nicely inform whoever was pulling her top, or holding her elbow, or some such, to desist from doing so. Here I do not seek to paint an exaggerated picture of the kinds of 'attention' some women received. Yet many female friends, without my prompting, felt intimidated by the space.

The contrary is also true. I first met one woman, Nothando, at a talk at a Chatham House event on Zimbabwe. I was to see her later, usually with a friend, at Sanganai.

[18] These are popular gochi-gochi and drinking places in Zimbabwe

They would come in and sit at a couch, sipping on their wine, and the times I had the opportunity to converse with them about the place, they were comfortable, and stated that they came for the food, and the cheap wine, and all else did not concern them. Maybe because they knew the place better, or had become accustomed to the numbers of men in the place. Nothando and her friend were Ndebele, so the kinds of anecdotes, idioms and familiar grammars I could use with other men were not present. It is something I also consider elsewhere, whether Zimbabweans exist or not, against the background of a nascent, masculine, and floundering decolonial and nation building project, which borders on the kinds of grotesque that many such projects exude.

Then the old lady making sadza stirs the oxtail, and the chicken, and the wafting smells of the food, tantalising and inviting, reach the nostrils of the people arguing some political point, and in that moment, we become Zimbabwean, and line up for a taste of 'our staple' and laugh about how a man needs to have sadza first, as a good base for the alcohol to follow. By the time most men are licking their hands and belching after a plate of food, I am too full to argue politics and belonging, and can happily wash it down and bust some moves with the usually suited, pot-bellied guy standing next to the Rick Ross lookalike, waiting for his turn to plug his phone in and play some Chitekete from Leonard Dembo. I really do not want to be hugged though! Sanganai bar exists as that communal and 'communing' space, reaffirming some idea and sense of individual and collective diasporic masculinity, as a reminiscent space. It also creates a network of men, who share ideas and experiences of diaspora, of women, and of nightlife in London. It is convivial. This conviviality was also noted when, after some time we went back to discover that the old lady who used to cook was no longer there, replaced by a younger woman. The presence of a new person, a new body, reconfigured the space of the kitchen, and the comfort with which we used to walk in and out and crack jokes with the old lady we called *ambuya*, grandmother. She had become unwell with old age, and with her departure went shared moments and anticipated ones. With the younger lady now doing the cooking, the price of sadza also went up, and it took a while to adjust to the new atmosphere, and the cost!

In late 2014, I invited some friends, non-Zimbabwean, as I was often trying to see the possibilities of changing complexions to the bar. Like other instances I had invited

friends, especially female, it was hilarious the kind of interest I aroused, and the many inquiries I got about who they were, and the eagerness of some regular faces to interest me in some banal conversation. After some considerable drink and dancing to all sorts of music, we decided to look for another bar somewhere in or near Old Street. Amidst a group of a few Zimbabwean women who were in the bar that day was a young woman, whose mother I had met before and had conversations with, and who a Nigerian friend had taken a fancy to. He decided to invite her. From the look of things, she had had one too many, and was finding it difficult to stand, or walk straight. She had to take off her high heels and walk with the aid of the interested Nigerian friend. We caught a bus, and between drunken discussions of how cheap the beer was at the bar and plastic vaginas, ended up at a place called the Troy Bar, on Hoxton Street.

The rancour and obstinacy that ensued was unexpected, as the young woman fell all over the place and got into arguments with security. I was summoned by the security, and informed that I needed to take my 'friend' home. I had no clue where she lived. By the end of the night she was lying on the pavement, with a blood-spattered mouth from a nasty fall, waiting for an ambulance with my Nigerian friend. I found myself contemplating some of the conversations about not having 'our sisters' in this place that sold cheap beer, as I felt both embarrassed and sorry, and complicit in making judgements about the lack of respectability in this performance. I was obviously worried because she was drunk, and a woman. Sometimes, as has been argued by others, you recognise that our values (those that have been inculcated in us) are not like our coats, that we can take off and hang, suspend as we inhabit 'the field', or engage in conceptual analysis.

What I have endeavoured to show here is how Sanganai is a place and space that creates forms of sociality amenable to certain constructions of belonging and identity. In finding themselves at the place that is the official home of Zimbabwe in Britain, and underground, people feel that there is a sense of travelling in time and space, back home. The masks that are put on might be taken off, and tongues get untied, able to converse in an elsewhere within an elsewhere, evoking Simmel's dialectic of the double boundary (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1989). The inside and outside here are present and collapsed at the same time, as the limits of migrancy, precarity and

abjection are suspended and imagined as absent, whilst being-Zimbabwean-in-the-elsewhere peculiar to Sanganai is imagined into existence.

## Oliver Mtukudzi and Sulumani Chimbetu in London: Generations of Zimbabwean Music on Stage[19]

> From the turn of the century, the numbers of Zimbabweans who chose to vote with their feet and set up base abroad began to swell substantially. And since that time Tuku has been at it, like a musical Florence Nightingale, doing the ward rounds across the Zimbabwean Diaspora. With song and dance, he has nursed their weeping wounds of nostalgia and empathised with them over the painful realities of life in the diaspora. 'Hakuna akaziva Marimuka idikita (No one knew that life in the Diaspora was hard work and sweat),' Tuku sings on Izere Mhepo, a track that laments the tough and often unrewarding life of many in the Diaspora. To a community that is caught up between the drudgery of round the clock shift work and unremitting responsibilities to families back in Zimbabwe, such insightful and empathic lyrics go a long way in making Diaspora lives more understandable to those back home (Chofamba Sithole, 2013).

Much like the narration and description of the musical experience at 414 in Brixton, I here also engage with an event where Oliver Mtukudzi, one of the most celebrated artists to come out of Zimbabwe, performed with Sulumani Chimbetu at a hotel in London. The exploration of this episode similarly melds together the construction of an ethnographic present and past, as writing and as experience.

To reiterate part of the argument that is being made throughout this conversation, this musical event as a specific moment, and as part of a broader experience of music for Zimbabweans in Britain, I regard as defying social death. I take from Stokes that music, musical production and performance, as well as the acts of listening, dancing, arguing, discussing, thinking and writing music provide the means by which Zimbabwean migrant identities can be (re)constructed and mobilised (Stokes, 1994,

[19] I also published parts of this section during my fieldwork, as with the previous one on Paul Lunga, on the Royal Africa Society's What's on Africa site.

2004). I am also using this event as a way of conveying the varied and affective nature of musicking. In these moments of musicking, the numerous complexities of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere come to the fore. The generative possibilities that come with being in Britain at different times, and the different narratives that follow (Brah, 2005) are exemplified here through Oliver Mtukudzi and Sulumani Chimbetu, who are touring musicians, and represent different generations of Zimbabwe music. Kyker has argued that Mtukudzi's music enables audiences to symbolically reposition themselves within the social relations of a remembered home, especially in the context of the 'wilderness' that is diaspora (Kyker, 2013).

## And the Beat Goes On

At this point, as I prepare to rush out and meet Mudhara Wala, I am accepting that at this moment, and in many others to come, is now my life, this is what I do. I go where Zimbabweans go (when I feel it is safe to do so. My experience at a Zim-dancehall event in Dunstable was evidence that even in spaces that are supposedly convivial, and reminiscent of 'home', forms of violence are always present, considering that even home as invented memory and physical place, is also a site of (dis)similar forms of violence), and I follow where Zimbabwean music sounds. Friday the 21st of March 2014 sees me trekking towards The Greatest Hits Tour, where Oliver 'Tuku' Mtukudzi and Sulumani 'Sulu' Chimbetu, from Zimbabwe are playing.

I arrive early at the venue of the event, Royal Regency Hotel, in Manor Park. The last time I saw Oliver Mtukudzi playing live was in 2008 in South Africa. I was with an Australian friend, and we were ushering in the new year to uncertainty, as I was not yet sure how long, or fruitful my stay in South Africa was going to be. So, I am obviously filled with excitement and anticipation.

This time, I am alone, and the comforts of friends, though needed, are not present, and I am in a fairly predictable, I would like to think, environment ( I try not to think about the said pathologies of blackness, or dying like Jimmy Mubenga[20] (Fekete, 2011)). I have thought of Jimmy Mubenga because another performer on the night is Sulumani Chimbetu, son to legendary Simon 'Chopper' Chimbetu, whose popular song 'Sean

[20] Jimmy Mubenga was a deportee who died in October 2010, at the hands of security personnel whilst being forced on a flight to Angola.

Timba', with the words *batai munhu* (a call to violence), is what death and deportation was to Mubenga.

Tonight is going to be my first night watching Sulumani live, and I am, of other certainties I pray for, sure I do not want to see any *batai munhu* kinds of situations. I can assure you that by the end of the night, whilst we walk back and forth looking for where the car, which is my lift home, has been parked, there is shouting, pushing and shoving. The spirit of *batai munhu* would have caught on.

Arriving early is not such a good thing in such situations as I end up carrying tables around the venue, and following people aimlessly around asking for a press pass, which, by the end of the night, I still do not have. I am looking up at the big and bright chandeliers on the roof, and the white cloth-draped chairs and glittering things in the section that is VIP. We pay to feel important. Capital has no mercy. Fortunately, I get into conversation with two Japanese ladies, one of whom has flown that very morning all the way from Turkey just for Oliver Mtukudzi. She tells me her name is Shoko. I express my surprise at her love for Oliver Mtukudzi, and she expresses her love for the music, and asks what one of his songs, which says *tumirai shoko*, means. After carrying tables and getting frustrated for a pass, passing for a translator does not seem such a bad thing—all this before the gig.

The stage is set, and Heritage Survival warm the stage, or as one of the band members puts it, they are chasing away the cold of the UK from the stage, so the two Zimbabwean artists can find it warm enough. A Zambian guy, dapper, who has been telling me about the importance of self-esteem as a black man, says to me, "they sound like Thomas Mapfumo". I nod in agreement.

*Heritage Survival*

When Oliver Mtukudzi comes on stage, there seems to be a gap. I just feel as if there is a vacuum, but he does give a sterling performance, with people joining him in song, especially when he belts out 'Tozeza'. For a moment, it seems his sound does not connect with the crowd in the way I was expecting it to. At his age, he still prances around the stage. I get exhausted just sitting on the tube! I bump into Shingai Shoniwa, and I remember why I love doing this work, and researching on Zimbabweans and music. I get to carry tables, translate for Japanese women, and meet amazing people, like Shingai Shoniwa. Generations of Zimbabwean music present in this one space. Oilver Mtukudzi, Heritage Survival, Sulumani Chimbetu, Shingai Shoniwa. The richness is evident, to me at least.

As one of the best artists to ever come out of Zimbabwe, one can see the love and respect Oliver Mtukudzi commands. Phones and iPads are out as people capture the antics of this great musician, and I catch, from the corner of my eye, this one couple

that is grinding on each other like it is 'Hold Yuh' by Gyptian. Who knew Tuku could elicit such gyrations!

*Shingai Shoniwa and Matthias Julius at the Greatest Hits Tour*

That gap I felt seems closed when Sulumani joins Tuku on stage, and there is a vibrancy, an energy, that I was not feeling before. A duet of young and old, in some ways a performance of the sun rising and the sun setting, simultaneous manifestations of the continuum of life and creative energy, that have defied time, and place, and travelled across seas and borders. Who will deport music, put it in detention, or unleash the spirit of *batai munhu* upon it? Music becomes borderless in transcending differences of age, class and gender in moments, and in also enabling people to cross the borders of abjection, moving across spaces that allow a conviviality and camaraderie that everyday life in the elsewhere is shorn of.


*Sulumani joins Tuku on stage*

The attire that Sulumani comes with on stage is interesting. I am not sure if they are dressed like pilots, or members of the air force, which might also be pilots, or the navy. It is some uniform, and Sulumani has this white and shiny jacket on. His set continues with that energy that he brought when Tuku was on stage, and he belts out his father's songs. In one song, he likens himself to his father, saying, "*Sulu wacho ndiye chopper*" (Sulu is Chopper), as he touches his ears, his nose, points to his shoes, his belt, all to say he indeed is a reincarnation of 'Chopper'. I find it a bit narcissistic, but well, he does resemble, and has carried the legacy of, his father.

*Sulu and his shiny white suit*

Suddenly there is dispersal, the volume is turned down, and Sulumani does not get the chance to say goodbye, or do the ritual of the last song. I did not even see where the whole night went, that is how good the music is. It is already morning on a Saturday, and people mill around, supposedly talking about the show, catching up with friends, or maybe searching for something. Isn't it the tragedy of being, that we are always searching, for something?

It is during this dispersal, of this Zimbabwean diaspora, that the spirit of *batai munhu* rears its head. There is shouting and shoving, people are pushed against walls, and we watch and wonder, where is that car parked? There are worse things on a Saturday morning, and we will not let this spirit mar a night that was filled with table carrying, translations, timeless songs, and tiredness in the end.

The music of Oliver Mtukudzi, as Kyker recognises, as that of Sulumani and his late father, Simon Chimbetu, is here an important vehicle for the reconstructions of home

and memory, the creation of a symbolic place, a space that we can go back to and imagine Zimbabwe (Kyker, 2013, 2016). The musicking, the dancing, gyrating, the shouting of songs that people want Mtukudzi to sing and the singing along become part of an embodiment of not just pleasure and the conviviality created, but of that black frivolity and abandon that is often denied by the disciplining and policing of bodies in the elsewhere. There is a sense that this music has brought us 'warmth from home', that it is taking many back to the '*Dande*' of their mother's breasts, the mythical place of peace, plenty and pleasure (Maurice T Vambe, 2008).

As I look around at the dispersing crowd, my eyes meet those of an older couple that I have sometimes seen at the Zimbabwe Catholic congregation that I later engage with. I walk over to greet them, and we exchange a few words. I think to myself how these spaces are navigated sometimes by the same people, who on one end find an anchor in the sense of community and the moral economies of religion, whilst also being found in these convivial spaces that are sometimes derided for going against the morality of the church and the *unhu*. Yet, as Kyker observes, Mtukudzi's music is firmly entrenched in the indigenous Shona cosmologies of *unhu*, and is as crucial in the reaffirmation of diasporic moral economies, in addition to linking those in the elsewhere to kinship obligations and traditions in Zimbabwe ( Kyker, 2011).

As with most of these events, there is some food for sale, sadza and some trotters is what I go for, a decision I later regret when I go home as it keeps me up and in the toilet. No better way to reaffirm one's being human than to fear that life might (not) end with an Oliver Mtukudzi gig.

I have engaged with this moment of musicking, as a way of conveying the intricacies of convivial spaces, and how musicking remains a rejection of abjection, where a shared understanding of the vagaries of diasporic journeys exists between performers and audiences, because Britain is 'cold' not just in weather, but in the kinds of dislocation the elsewhere brings. Music from home becomes a collective blanket that, even temporarily, warms the hearts and bodies of those present. Granted, the songs that Oliver Mtukudzi and Sulumani Chimbetu play during the show are played loudly in cars as they leave the venues and are to be heard some more at many Zimbabwean events in London.

## On Thinking Place/Space, Home and Belonging

> The long history of black dispossession and violence— this world, that world, a world not only covets the idea of ownership and racial subjection but rewards practices of capital accumulation, which is also a world where black is always owned and un-owning—necessarily informs a black sense of place Hudson and McKittrick (2013:234).

So far, it is evident from the experiences I have explored that Zimbabweans have historically engaged with music in ways that resist abjection, allowing place-making and negotiations of identity and belonging. As I contemplate how to start writing about place, about home, my mind reaches for Alice Walker. In a documentary about her life, *Beauty in Truth,* after some commentary on the romantic relationships she had with different men and women, she smiles, and asks why anyone would want to stay in one place. It is a statement which functions against a received 'wisdom', a sometimes-essential understanding of what it means, or how one wants or desires, to belong. It is, in a way, a railing against embodying fixity, stasis, a refusal of any inherent desiring of one body, and consequently place. It can also be read as a rejection of normative moral boundaries, transcended both in word, and in deed, in an ability to write and think outside the confines of historical contexts and moments, but not think without them. It is a version of mobility in which home is found in the bodies of others, multiple others, outside heteronormative boundaries.

There is a joke, often told amongst Zimbabweans, about a man who works in the city and has his family in the village, the typical commuter family established by the colonial economy. On weekends, he goes to the village, and regales the old men in the village with stories about the city, about Saddam Hussein and what is happening in America. Tired of the man's incessant pontifications, one old man decides to ask him a question. 'Do you know Nyoni?' the old man asks. 'Who is Nyoni?' the man replies. The old man smiles and says Nyoni is the man sleeping with your wife here in the village whilst you are in the city learning about Saddam Hussein and America.

The kinds of discursive disciplinary practices that shape normative ideals also shape knowledge, and the journeys embarked on. This refusal to be bogged down, regarded

as some kind of intellectual/epistemological/theoretical promiscuity, is as much embodied as it is written, circulated and imagined. The grammars of describing, defining, categorising and explaining experience lent themselves to different kinds of journeys, diasporic sensibilities, some steeped in and desiring roots, other more rhizomatic—routed (Ahmed, 2000, 2004; Brah, 2005; Clifford, 1994, 1997a; Gilroy, 1993a, 1997). What does it mean to think of place, of home and belonging, as a body that, whether by choice, or circumstance, lives in the cracks of places that other people call home, cracks in approximations to knowledge, as well as cracks in the edifices of the practices and performances that cultivate belonging? Also, embedded in this notion of diaspora, space and place is a symbolic revolt against the nation state, thus diaspora holds a dual significance—transnational dimension to black identity and a necklace strung together by histories of slavery, colonialism and other forms of black subjugation, defiance and death. The (black) Zimbabwean body is marked by the colonial gaze, history and memory, the complexity and the material and mental consequences of blackness.

At this level then, of trying to think place, in a place, is *anthropology* the first port of call, the source of a legitimacy that bestows belonging? Or the approximate nature of knowledge/knowing means boundaries can, and maybe should be crossed, journeys across various modes of thinking and seeing that allow for trans/multi-versal conceptualisations? Is there a one of us/one of them conundrum? It is a situation reminiscent of the insider-outsider complication, where I have existed, 'in the field', as someone who pre-reflectively belongs to the category, and thus place, Zimbabwean, whilst also trying to gain access and become accepted as part of an emergent Zimbabwean diaspora. It produces that fascinating 'post-fieldwork', sometimes hilariously anti-climactic declaration one is wont to make, that *I became one of them*. But did I? Teasing out some of the contentions around place, home and belonging also demands asking what are the frames of intelligibility that create or allow the conditions of possibility for some (black Zimbabwean bodies, anthropologists, knowers) to inhabit, have/own, or experience space, and place, as marked, or as unmarked and commonplace? This is because home suggests a safety, familiarity and comfort, a knowledge and intimacy that the figures and tropes of the migrant and the diasporic contest, in writing lives and experiences, as well as the lived itself. In other words, when do these bodies become part of the mundane, the

unnoticeable? The power of discursive practices is that there are then migrant and diasporic bodies (black or other in this instance) and then there are just bodies. (white or other). The frames of intelligibility already create, and become a site of establishing, stabilising and circulating understandings of home and belonging, in place and space as physical and material or as imagined.

Invoking Doreen Massey, Neely and Samura acknowledge that space is contested, fluid, historical, relational and interactional and also imbued with difference and inequality (Massey, 1994; Neely & Samura, 2011). Space is an active archive of the social processes and social relationships composing racial orders. Active because it is not just a monument, accumulated through a racial past and present—although it is also that—it is active in the sense that it interacts with people and their activities as an ongoing set of possibilities in which race is fabricated (Knowles, 2003). We can look at Sanganai, at the Africa Centre, the event at Club 414, among others, as places, within spaces, and that produce spaces in a racialised past and present. The kinds of musicking and sociation that ensue in these spaces does not just reflect structures and processes of the prevailing social order within which migrancy and diaspora experiences are to be found. They become spaces of imagining, the 'time travel' qualities of being in the basement bar, the affective ramifications of Paul Lunga blowing the trumpet and giving brief histories of township music in Zimbabwe, or the lady remembering her journey to Britain and requesting Alick Macheso songs at the Christmas party.

I am also thinking here, in a maybe slightly self-indulgent way, of myself, how the very process of wrecking one's mind trying to imagine and unpack an understanding of place and belonging reveals the kinds of tensions I have about where I am, and whether I belong or want to at all. Like Alice Walker, do I think transiency as desirable or do I subscribe to a desire for home as stable and enduring? Neither and both. I imagine home, as and in place, as fickle and punctuated, as it is in memory and aspiration.

It is my position that emplacement, as an intertwinement of home, place and belonging, assumes a physicality and materiality, a conception of *being in* a place, *having* a place that one can call home, and *feeling*, from the experiences of being and

having, that one belongs. Yet there is also the irrefutable existence in limbo, of being in places, having places that could be called home, and still not belonging. If, to simplify a more complex argument, it is not where you are from, but where you are at (Gilroy, 1991), how are the tensions and dissonances of occupying the margins where you are at, based on where you are from, or assumed to be from, dealt with? Ferreira da Silva is of the view that even as one considers the arguments around the reproduction of social and conceptual death (Da Silva, 2014), that invoking and utilising the invented idea of race (just as Gilroy also variously grapples with the utility of race as a conceptual and analytic lens, whilst recognising its import still (Gilroy, 1990, 1998, 2012) ) the category of blackness exists in/as thought, always (maybe often, I would say) already in the historical imagination and the present, a referent of commodity, an object and the other, as fact beyond evidence.

Starting with Alice Walker is in this conversation a way of placing race and embodiment somewhere in the mix, as a way of initiating the discussion on the materiality and physicality of place, home and belonging. What comes first, the body, or the conceptualisations of emplacement? Is there home and belonging without the bodies? What does it then mean, to inhabit a black female body, like Alice Walker, and refuse to belong in any essential way? The same could be asked of me, or any other migrant body that now constitutes the Zimbabwean diaspora and has to engage with being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere.

It might also be prudent to emphasise the intertwined and entangled ways I am using place and space. Following Massey, I am here not limiting the understanding of place to a view of place as bounded, as in various ways a site of an authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity. It is a conceptualisation of place that rests in part on the view of space as stasis. I have been and continue to adopt and adapt place and space together to emphasise a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity. Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification. Such a way of conceptualising the spatial, moreover, inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces—cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or

existing in relations of paradox or antagonism. Most evidently this is so because the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding dissimilar positions as part of it. In addition, the precise mix of social relations that are thus part of what defines the uniqueness of any place is by no means all included within that place itself (Massey, 1994).

Lefebvre offers some useful conceptions of space that can be deployed here to explore being Zimbabwean and in the elsewhere (Lefebvre, 1991, 2009; Lefebvre & Enders, 1976). Space for Lefebvre is political and ideological. It is a product literally populated with ideologies. There is an ideology of space, because space, which seems homogeneous, which appears given as a whole in its objectivity, in its pure form, such as we determine it, is a social product—production in space to production of space, (capitalist space)—with oppressive and repressive capacities. There are also echoes of Massey here, with the important dimension of the gendered and contested nature of space as political and ideological, whilst also recognising the relationship of space to wider socio-political and economic structures and processes (Massey, 1994).

Lefebvre imagines space as exploding, always, on all sides, at different levels of conceptualisations. As much as it is important to question, and at time reject fixed notions of space, and place, and to argue for transiency and fluidity, it is also equally important to consider that the search for stability and emplacement characterises the sense of loss and dislocation that many Zimbabweans experience in the elsewhere, and spaces and places are not always exploding and opening up in benevolent ways. Often, spaces open up to swallow, for expulsion, for kinds of social death. Like the closure of the old Africa Centre, spaces open and close, as Lefebvre rightly notes, in political and ideological ways.

Having said this, I would like to consider some of the possibilities that are brought to the fore by having this conversation around belonging, especially in relation to Zimbabweans in London. The received categories Zimbabwe, Zimbabwean (lumped together with black or African in Britain) already places the migrant in a physical, geographical territory. It is, in common parlance, their *home* country, but is it? With many leaving a repressive Rhodesia, and those arriving in Britain post-2000 escaping a collapsing Zimbabwe, maybe we can call these places, where other bodies have

come from in this moment, as places of origin, nodes on the diasporic journeys Brah refers to (Brah, 2005). It is the poverty of language and definition then, that the way one chooses to describe the places consequently imposes on these bodies a being from and of an elsewhere, and thus, contesting the legitimacy of those bodies to be in place, and at home.

On a warm summer day in 2013, I went for a neighbourhood festival in Kilburn Park, invited by Wala, who was to be, and remains an important friend and point of access to many Zimbabwean and Africa-related musical events and experiences. After sweating in a colourful apron of green, red and yellow, (looking like a Zimbabwean flag in the sun) and helping out with some cooking and packing up Wala's stand, we decided to go for a beer at a nearby pub with a group of other Zimbabwean men. The encounter I am interested in here is the one that I have already referenced, when one of the Zimbabwean men, after having an argument with someone over his bicycle, and my futile attempts to be pacifist, went on to tell me that I did not know these people, the British, because I am a *mafikizolo*, a new arrival. By calling me this name, he established a hierarchy of belonging and a knowledge of place that put him in an authoritative position relative to me. To be a young Zimbabwean man, amongst other Zimbabweans, was obviously an inadequate claim to belonging, and I cannot say at this stage I felt at home. I come back to this encounter later in this conversation.

The contestations surrounding belonging thus are as much about claims to autochthony, as they are about hierarchies that emerge even amongst people, black bodies, who are supposedly similarly from elsewhere. Convivial spaces become sites of struggle, arenas for the assertion of certain forms of identification, and in a manner, social capital. *Foreign* bodies police other *foreign* bodies regarding claims to place. The kinds of derision that characterise the views of Zimbabweans, who self-identify as such, who came to Britain when Zimbabwe was Rhodesia, on those who arrived post-2000, are evidence of this kind of contestation as well. Somehow, their journey was characterised by, in some views, a more honourable cause, in the context of anti-colonialism, and they had different relationships to Britain.

A musical journey to those moments shows that the kinds of musicking that defined migrant existence, as one friend mentioned, were about the soundtracks of resistance,

of speaking and writing back to empire, and skinning the skunk of racism in Britain. With Bob Marley performing in Zimbabwe at independence, the transnational and diasporic musical connections of that generation of Zimbabweans were at the fore. Bodies that traversed the Atlantic, descendants of enslavement, were part of transnational modes of anti-colonial resistance, and travelled, as the music they were producing did. Zimbabwean bands in the '70s and '80s in London, such as The Stars of Liberty, represented an emergence of new ways of being elsewhere, as well as aspirations of place. In Chimurenga music legend Thomas Mapfumo's pre-independence songs, which were popular amongst transnational communities of Zimbabweans, Zimbabwe was invoked as a future, a place in the tomorrow, an aspiration that could be attained in the aftermath of settler colonialism. Images of women lifting their skirts and dancing in Harare, young children running in the streets, of euphoria, ushered in an independence that many thought was heralding a new home, a place they had imagined. Three decades and-a-half later, Zimbabweans sing songs of nostalgia and memory.

In the earlier story of the lady who told me the story how when she had come to Britain to claim asylum, one of the few things she carried with her was an Alick Macheso cassette. She bought a small radio and would play this cassette again and again between shifts. She felt that in the piece of plastic and ribbon that produced the voice of Alick Macheso and the guitars of *sungura*, she was carrying fragments, sounds, rhythms, words of a place she called home. These fragments have become more and more vestigial, tiny dots receding over the horizon. She has had to learn to make Britain home. Yet she remains a migrant. So, what, where is home? A floundering Zimbabwe she had to run from? A Britain, and Brighton that has not been as bright, seeing her more as a blight? Or maybe home, or whatever vestigial elements remain of it, is somewhere in space of the here and the there, plastic and ribbon on the Alick Macheso cassette, in that voice belting out songs in Shona and Chewa. Places, homes and belonging(s) are as much material, as they are imagined, and somewhere in the interstices of places and spaces, in memories of what was, or could have been, reconstructions of the journey of becoming a migrant, a foreigner, hopes and aspirations of being in, having place(s) and feeling that one belongs, or engaging in the practices and performances that engender such. Home is, so to say, in refusing that death by dislocation.

Her children like different forms of music. They do not remember much about Zimbabwe. It is a name, a place that sounds to them like when someone calls your name, or that knock you hear, when sleeping, and you wonder whether you are dreaming or not. A distant place they used to know, a place where their mother, more than they, comes from. Their music is the music of, in, Britain, a music that establishes Britain as a place they can live in, and belong to, although they get subtle, and not so subtle reminders regularly that there 'ain't no black in the union jack'. That is when Zimbabwe looms large in sounds of a new urban music, dancehall and hip hop, and being from elsewhere becomes, not a source of derision, but a spring of strength, and an avenue for resistance. History, after all, as Zimbabwe and a place that used to be called home, is not just in the past. It is lived and re-imagined in the present.

Just as my own ethnographic experiences was composed of multiple sites, of moving from one place and moment to the other, so are the lives and experiences of Zimbabweans not seamless, even as one assumes an originary source, a journey from elsewhere, to here. I have lived in Zimbabwe, in South Africa, and now Britain. Johannesburg had started to *feel like home, as the place to be* before I had to learn to make sense of London as a different place and space. Being *in the field*, as a place, as London, has been an experience of drawing on these different places that I continue to feel an affinity to, Johannesburg and Harare. Many aspects of these cities, in music and bodies, have journeyed across borders and found me here. In October of 2014, I sat in a room at LSE, next to a South African young man, who has learnt to make London home, and Zimbabwean writer Brian Chikwava, who has done the same. We listened to Hugh Masekela sing 'Stimela', play his trumpet and mimic the sound of the train, songs of migration, carrying migrants from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Angola, to the mines of South Africa. We listened to him talk about the legacy of Steve Biko and black consciousness, the place of music in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles. In that room, we traversed places and spaces through musical practice, and I carried the places with me in my body. I often felt this way at Sanganai Bar, as did other friends, they profess. The food, the music, language and general ambience of the place becomes constitutive of a kind of teleportation, a time travel, that takes people back and forth, through memory and nostalgia, and possibilities of what could have been and can be. It is in the lyrics of Oliver Mtukudzi's songs 'Nhava'

and 'Dande' that invoke the tropes of migration as journeying in a dark forest in search of the material, only to encounter disappointment; yet there is also a yearning for 'Dande', a mythical place of origin, a space where the traveller can return to suckle at his mother's breast (Kyker, 2013; Vambe, 2008).

The gochi-gochi barbecue places in London that I explore, especially frequented by Zimbabweans over summer, also indicate attempts at making home out of spaces that are usually designated as something else, such as sports clubs and fitness centres. Over a weekend, especially Sundays, these are turned into social spaces by the food and music, and a general irreverence for the kinds of performances of migrancy that bestow belonging outside these spaces. For a moment, the frames of intelligibility shift, in space and time.

I must say that the imaginations, memories, aspirations of place, home and belonging are as real as the constraints and opportunities that the physicality and materiality of place impose. To agree with Massey in conceptualisation, place in spatially unbounded ways is not to ignore how diasporic journeys are indeed bordered and bounded. In contemporary Britain, when a political party such as UKIP garners support, and when the idea of Fortress Europe grows stronger and more insidious strategies of exclusion are devised, the body of the migrant–is found as what Tate, referring to academia, calls bodies out of place (Tate, 2014), and belonging to a pipe dream, torn by the teeth of a vicious vampire project of autochthony. I guess it ceases to be where you are at, or where you are from, but where you can be sent back to in the most (in)convenient way. The image of Home Office vans emblazoned **go home** flash across one's mind, and the search for a soundtrack that captures the moment continues. When they say go home, are black Zimbabweans going to go back to Zimbabwe, and white Zimbabweans, who Boris Johnson gleefully called their kith and kin, not home already? Once again, the fractured head of such received categories as Zimbabwe rears its head. Who belongs where, through what means? The dangers of resorting to some essential understanding (often racialised) of place, home and belonging are apparent.

This is more the case in a context of precarity, in which the ability to inhabit space also hinges on one's consumptive capacities, on the material ability to claim

belonging. In this sense, the economic position becomes crucial in shaping how one fits into the architecture of a place. London as a place that has historically played host to migrants, has a particular economic character, which, in recent years has made living in the place impossible for some. Conversations around gentrification suggest this shifting inhabiting of place. Once again, the bodies of those at the centre of economic life exist as just that, whilst the bodies of those on the margins, that exist precariously, are marked as alien. It becomes a case of one being productive of the other. Is London then the place to be for the migrant? Home seems to be where the capital is. The bodies of those intimate with capital can create or find home in more fluid, resource-backed ways.

At a time when technology and the virtual seem indispensable, are there possibilities that home and belonging, especially for these bodies of the migrant, the precariat, are to be found in the virtual? As more music, videos, and experiences are shared virtually, the understandings of intelligibility and possibilities of belonging shift, yet without diminishing the experiences and consequences of the material. The imagined and aspirational find an ally, maybe, in the virtual. As the experience of Catherine shows, the generation of Zimbabweans coming to Britain post-2000, even those who may have initially carried cassettes, have benefitted from the constructions of a virtual diaspora, online communities that become platforms for the production and circulation of Zimbabwean music, and consequently, diasporic being and belonging.

In an age where increasing numbers of people are stateless and bureaucratic practices of discipline and surveillance ever entrenched, home and belonging remain contested, when one is not from, of any place, and thus, in the language of rights, does not have a *right* to be in a place based on a tracing of bureaucratic trails. Borders and boundedness are as much part of the experience of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, as are places that, through musicking, mediate social relationships in the construction of a more fluid experience of home and belonging. In the face of the possibilities of abjection, Zimbabweans reconfigure place and space in London, and create avenues for the reiteration of Zimbabwean identities.

## Gochi-Gochi and Zim-dancehall

We have so far traversed the different historical, affective, transnational moments that manifest the forms of conviviality that Zimbabweans are part of in this elsewhere. These different moments revolve around the kinds of sociality that ensue out of musical places and spaces, and become part of the broader negotiation of being Zimbabwean in Britain. In what follows, I extend these positions to the space of the gochi-gochi, the barbecue space, and Zim-dancehall, a version of dancehall music borrowed from Jamaica. Zim-dancehall has been recognised as having an appeal, particularly to young Zimbabweans, but also to a wider audience, because of its social commentary. In a Zimbabwe that continues to face numerous socio-political and economic challenge, such music is viewed as an avenue for expressing discontent and multiple views on what obtains both within and outside the country (Ureke & Washaya, 2016).

Zim-dancehall and the experiences accompanying it in Britain also relates to the argument on locating Zimbabwean experiences in London as part of the genealogy of black experiences in Britain, of struggle, resistance, transnational music—seen here in the relationships between Jamaican dancehall and Zim-dancehall—and negotiating belonging in the elsewhere. The gochi-gochi and Zim-dancehall also function as examples of how Zimbabweans reconfigure and transform place and space, so that, even as the well-known venues where Zimbabweans used to meet, as expressed by Fred Zindi and Wala, are increasingly closing, new spaces of conviviality emerge, which ensure that the diasporic experience is not solely that of incessant work and wilting, but as the quote on Oliver Mtukudzi by Sithole points out, that musicking offers a way out of a sometimes seemingly untenable abjection.

In May 2014, I attended a Zimbabwean sound system contest at a Dunstable leisure centre, that was converted into a musical space for that night, where different groups competed in various categories to be the winners of the Zim Cup Clash. A predominantly young audience that came to Britain post-2000 would sing along to most of the songs, and dance to songs that were as current in Zimbabwe as they were amongst Zimbabweans in Britain. This event, as I emphasise, brings back once again those historical and genealogical connections to a black Atlantic, a diasporic reggae

and dancehall that finds expression in political resistance, yet is not overtly so in the present, or in similar ways.

Parallels with the policing of black bodies historically, reminiscent of expositions by Stuart Hall around mugging and moral panic, for instance, and experienced during the Notinghill Carnival historically (Burr, 2006; Gutzmore, 1982; Jackson, 1988), also abound as the event was disrupted several times by police who came to inform the organisers that the neighbours were complaining about noise, when the event had received clearance. One of the organisers assured me that I had no reason to be surprised, because the police had come to every event they had hosted with an ostensible warning or inquiry, and that these were motions he knew how to go through as they had to confront the police every other time. Placing Zimbabweans in the genealogies of black experience then also means recognising how they occupy a space of fraught relations between the police and the black community and 'ethnic minorities' in Britain, where racist ideology has been recognised to shape policing, from the days before and following the Brixton riots (Gilroy, 1982) to the investigation into the deaths of Stephen Lawrence (Cottle, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 1999) and Mark Duggan (Elliott-Cooper, 2013; Murji & Neal, 2011), among many other cases. Embedded in relationships of race and sociality in Britain, musicking for Zimbabweans in Britain is at times fraught with the kinds of surveillance and policing that have historically characterised black existence in this elsewhere. As sites for the negotiation of diasporic identity and belonging, and resistance to the disciplining, abjection and social death of the elsewhere, these performances of black conviviality and frivolity become subject to the kinds of suspicion and moral panic that inform perceptions of black peril, or the danger that black bodies carry with them, by virtue of their presence, and their refusal to die.

The first time some of my friends viewed videos of several events I had covered, especially the Zimbabwe Cup Clash, modelled on the Jamaican dancehall cup clashes, they said "*ndezvembanje izvi*", which can be translated to say that the kind of behaviour being seen could only be attributed to being stoned, or rather that there was no respectability there. Zim-dancehall as a genre, has reconfigured the kinds of spaces that young Zimbabweans inhabit, both in Zimbabwe, and in Britain. Making use of dances that have been characterised as 'sexual', energetic performances and

explicit lyrics, the music has also brought into spaces that have been musically and performatively dominated by Zimbabwean men, young Zimbabwean women. I have not permanently lived in Zimbabwe since 2008, hence the memories of dancehall and reggae I have are from the times in boarding school when we would move tables in the dining halls most Saturdays for a record evening, what was called R.E. Using mostly cassettes, and a few CDs, we would sweat, jump up and down and leave a sticky dining room floor, for what seemed like all night, when it was just about three hours. Many Zimbabweans, from before the time Bob Marley performed at Zimbabwe's independence celebrations, and since then even more, have grown up listening to reggae music and dancehall, being exposed to sound systems such as Stereo One International, Silverstone and Lion Heart, all these, like reggae and dancehall, inspired by Jamaican musical practice. Prominent artists of other genres, such as the late Andy Brown, incorporated chanters such as Potato, from the township Mbare in Zimbabwe, which has produced many of the young dancehall artists who perform here in Britain on tours.

Some of us also grew up with high dosages of Mutabaruka and Linton Kwesi Johnson's dub poetry, that was played incessantly early in the morning by the major state broadcaster in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. The import of the music and lyrics, as that of much Zimbabwean music in the diaspora, makes more sense in the elsewhere. As part of the relationship, that arguments such as those by Chikowero forward, between the state and music in Zimbabwe, one is made aware of the way state broadcasting in Zimbabwe leaned towards the pan-African values that had shaped the struggle for independence. There remained on radio and television programmes that tried to inculcate a sense of the relationship of Zimbabwe to the rest of the African continent, and to the wider black diaspora and its transnational circulations of music. It is in this space that Mutabaruka, Linton Kwesi Johnson, reggae and dancehall become part of Zimbabwean musicking. It was not uncommon on the streets of Highfield in Harare, as a young boy, to walk dancing and singing along to the sounds of reggae and dancehall that would be blaring out of speakers someone would have placed outside their window, or close to the road.

During my time in Johannesburg, I would usually go to a place called the Bassline on

Thursdays, for a reggae and dancehall night that has been run for over a decade by the DJs Jah Seed and Admiral. Jah Seed is a Zimbabwean who has performed with South African band Bongo Muffin, adding Shona lyrics to their songs. It is at Bassline that I first saw Winky D, a Zim-dancehall artist, who would go on to tour the UK, Australia and Canada, among others. He grew so big (in musical stature) that he was even invited to come and perform at a beer festival, with Angolan Cabo Snoop, at the institution where I was studying. It is not an anomaly to walk the streets of Zimbabwean townships and find mostly young men sitting on street corners, speakers outside their house windows blaring, as they listen to some reggae and dancehall. It used to be serious social capital to know the latest riddims and the big sound systems. It is also thus not a surprise to see how even as dancehall has grown in Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans in Britain and elsewhere are part of a transnational circulation of musical performance and culture, which resonates in many ways with the Afro-Caribbean presence in Britain: reggae, dub, sound systems, carnival, and the resultant musical scapes.

It is vital to note here that Zim-dancehall has tagged itself as music of the 'ghetto youths' in Zimbabwe, and although its performance does not directly resonate with the reggae soundtracks of anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance, there is a veritable case for a politics of place and (re)inventiveness that has seen these young men and women hailing from places associated with abjection, touring London and Sydney, and become part of the transnational circulation of Zimbabwean music, language and performance.

At a *gochi-gochi*, a barbecue place at an Enfield sports club in October 2013, I witnessed my first performance of Zim-dancehall in Britain by a young Zimbabwean woman named Lady Squanda. Mudhara Wala had called to inform me the day before, a Saturday, that a young Zimbabwean woman was coming to do a brief performance. I was not sure I would wake up on a Sunday with the energy and drive, but then I thought of the *sadza*, and the meat, and the opportunity to mingle with Zimbabweans. There is also usually a guy or two selling products from Zimbabwe, such as *Mazoe Crush* an orange juice brand, and I would often pick some, talk about their business, where they are based, anticipating and informing them of my own interests in also exploring food ways and food practices amongst Zimbabweans in Britain if I got the

opportunity. Suffice to say, Sunday came and I ended up in Enfield. Food bought and enjoyed, we milled around with Mudhara Wala waiting for the performance. On a previous occasion, there had been some publicity that a band would play. Disappointingly, the band that was expected did not show up. There would be constant updates early on telling us how the band was on their way, and as time wore on, the narrative would change to one of the band members having fallen sick, or some such excuse. It was the opinion of many that the management used these stunts as a way of getting more people to come, pay an entrance fee, buy meat and alcohol, and wait for Godot.

Unlike Sanganai, where you would find mostly men, in suits, jackets and other work attire, the *gochi-gochi* is more casual, and women and children are present. Although the *gochi-gochi* is usually portrayed as a family friendly space, I wondered many a time why children would be present in the place into the evening, as people danced and drank. Mudhara Wala pointed out that some of the challenges families had, especially the single mothers, was that they could not afford, or did not have, anyone to look after their children at home. Yet still they wanted to wind down, 'turn up' and enjoy themselves, ending up having to stay with their children at the *gochi-gochi* until late. As the colloquialism goes, their actions were asking 'turn down for what?' I did not want to ask, and reinforce the moral economy of 'good women stay at home although I did worry about the children running around in the midst of reverie and intoxication. Contrary to the vehement position of the tall, generously nosed person at the embassy, there are indeed spaces, that are not the church, that Zimbabwean women, with their families, can and do go to, and enjoy Zimbabwean and other musics, such as the *gochi-gochi*.

Big brother Sam would, however, constantly warn me of these women, him believing they did not have 'education' and were interested in forms of materiality that had nothing to do with the kind of knowledge economy I was interested in, in his eyes. The *gochi-gochi* women, to Sam, were not respectable enough. Conversations I had did not reveal anything untoward, except in one instance where one woman called me a *"musalad",* a word mostly used in Zimbabwe to describe those seen as having adopted what is viewed as Western culture, and being like a salad, a mix of many things. On one level, it might have referred to the fact, as Frank had said, that I was a *mafikizolo*.

On another, I felt it to be insinuating my relationship to the *gochi-gochi* place, as alien. On asking what made her say I was a *musalad*, Helen, for that was the ladies name, said it was because of the way I talked, dressed and carried myself. But look around, Helen, am I any different to the people here? You have blonde hair, a put-on pair of eyelashes and jacket with the name of an American basketball team, are you a *musalad*? You are the one also buying the champagne! We laughed. Helen was the generous woman, who liked taking me under her wing, like the 'Ndibvumbamireiwo' song, and to also make fun of me.

It is interesting how I would meet her regularly at the *gochi-gochi*, and a few other related Zimbabwean functions, but nowhere else, revealing the kinds of networks that Zimbabweans inhabit, and how they shape the spaces they spend time in and regard as leisure, or pleasure, and their consequent perceptions of other Zimbabweans. Helen would tell me of tales of her adventures in some African countries, and how she had met all these prominent people. She was often in the company of some female friends, and I would sit on their table, with another Kenyan guy, Mwangi, who claimed to be descendant of some royal African family, and be beguiled by the stories. A small stage was set, where a DJ was playing some Afrobeats, and a few ladies in high heels, and seemingly effort-fully curated, if one can say that, were, contrary to their outfits, effortlessly moving their bodies, and doing what I surmised were the latest dances to the Nigerian music that was being played, such as Davido, P-Square, Burna Boy and Tiwa Savage. A lady, Stephanie, was introduced on stage as the music faded, and she talked about some charity work that she was fundraising for and a book she was launching. I cannot say I paid the speech much heed, as I was eager to see Squanda. It was good to see someone try to do some charity work, but well, on a day where most minds were on food, beer and music, she would not have got much traction. The charity speech did eventually, thankfully, give way to Squanda.

Lady Squanda turned out to be a short, plump and diminutive woman with a presence and lots of energy, a husky voice, and lyrics that sent mostly the women in the place to the front of the stage hollering. Dressed in some red sleeveless shirt and black trousers, she sprang on stage and the women in the place started screaming. Her songs, all in Shona, like most Zim-dancehall songs, touched on issues around morality and disease, relationships and love, and her (self-proclaimed) status as the prominent

woman of Zim-dancehall. Of her list of songs performed on the night, one especially stood out for me, reminiscent of the late System Tazvida's 'Smoko', which has the lyrics *bhebhi idya mari…kusvikira yakusvota,* where the voice of the male character is encouraging a woman to spend as much as she wants of his money until she is fed up, nauseated, because he is too popular and has enough. In Lady Squanda's song, she is the one encouraging the women to spend the guy's money. She says these men in the diaspora like flashing their money and spending it on you, so there is no need for you to shy away or be coy about it. If he is willing to spend it, then take it all, as Tazvida says, until you are fed up.

The apparent implicit scripts behind/within this song she performed, and the kind of femininities she celebrates in this instance are in direct contrast to the demure 'educated' and 'non-materialistic' woman that Sam imagines to satisfy the tenets of the moral economy that shapes the 'good Zimbabwean woman'. In disrupting the dominant scripts around respectable femininity, Lady Squanda seems to be also simultaneously mocking these 'men in the diaspora' who think they can exhibit forms of masculinity based on material consumption, seeking distinction, and yet accuse the women amongst whom, or for whom, they perform the very masculinities, to cry wolf.

Making a call for what appears a hedonistic, materialistic being, becomes a way of asserting a femininity that owns space and proclaims and celebrates itself as being exactly that danger that these men who claim to desire and police respectable femininities are complicit in reproducing anyway. Or maybe I listened to the song more with an eye for instances that subverted notions of respectability that dominated Sanganai. As one friend, George, said to me, "It's like how it was in Zimbabwe. In some of these spaces, the women you meet are like your sisters. So once you and I know the same women, our turf moves elsewhere, because it is as if we are committing some kind of 'incest'." I would not imagine that Squanda was worried about that in her song. Within this diasporic musical space, she seems to be saying, if these men, who claim to be brotherly, are interested in staking a claim to particular versions of masculinity, ask you—in the mould of the P-Square, Akon and May D song—to chop the money, then chop it!

The fact that the young women who perform in Zim-dancehall exist already in contexts as women, by definition, does not deter most of them from adding 'Lady' to their names, like Lady Squanda. One observation is that this also comes from the Jamaican scene, where a popular, well known female name from Jamaican dancehall in Zimbabwe is Lady Saw. Lady Saw is much closer in lyrics and performance to another lady who has taken the dancehall scene by storm in Zimbabwe, in a metaphoric and literal sense, Lady Bee. To say that her lyrics in Shona are explicit is an understatement, which is why, as I have been told by many, she is not played on national radio in Zimbabwe, or at family functions, because no one wants to scurry to turn the volume down, or switch the system off when she comes on.

Whilst visiting a friend in Hatfield, just outside London, I got into a conversation about Zim-dancehall with a lady who quickly proceeded to tell me how she was keenly following the music, and had in recent times attended a Lady B performance in Dunstable, Luton. She took out her phone, and played me a video she had captured of some segments of the show. Of particular interest to her was the part where a man she claimed was her uncle was invited on stage, told to sit down as Lady B proceeded to perform what one would regard to be a lap dance. Dressed in what also looks like black leather similar to Lady Squanda, with a blue stripe running on both sides of the outfit, and a microphone in hand as she sings and dances on this man who is prostate and smiling endlessly, she conjures up the image of a dominatrix, of the female performer in control of a dance that is sexual, grinding on the man's crotch to the excitement of the crowd. As she does her 'twerking' and the performance hits its crescendo, I cannot help seeing the stark contrast in the performance, and the (not) acquiescing to notions of respectability that abounds in the continuum of spaces such as Sanganai, *gochi-gochi* and Dunstable, as well as the religiously derived ideas of migrant piety against the onslaught of a culture that is ostensibly eroding the 'Zimbabweanness' of many.

It is tempting to regard the (re)inventions and (re)imaginings of Zimbabwean femininity as the reproductions of a form of gender and sexual carcerality; a carcerality exported, or imagined from the originary place, Zimbabwe, to London. Yet it is also useful, in exploring the transnational and translational circulations of culture and being, to consider how gendered musicking in this case reveals the entanglements

of disparate, but connected metropolis, or the cosmopolis, for instance Harare, Johannesburg and London. In a way, these routes can inform the reproduction of a colonised and (post)colonial desiring and carcerality, characteristic of the remnants, and the perpetuity of empire. In this instance, one can also make the case, although acknowledging the peculiarities of Zimbabwean experiences, for conceptualising the performances of gender I encounter and interpret as manifestations of dislocation found in other migrant/diasporic groups seeking to reorient their bearings within situations of flux.

## Let These People Enjoy–They Work Very Hard

Laying claim to place and space in a precarious context is difficult. Yet a lot of work, including (Chikowero, 2015; Eyre & Mapfumo, 2001; Fumanti, 2013; Gilroy, 1993a, 1993b) reveals how those repeatedly pushed to the margins, by grammars and practices of exclusion, and alienated by the structures that bestow legitimacy, often find ways of reclaiming their being, and in so doing, reject the social death that is invited by this exclusion.

Zimbabweans, as a heterogeneous group, that experiences inclusion and exclusion in different ways, are no different. They have sought, through places and spaces like Sanganai bar, and the Catholic Church, to re-establish a sense of community, and well-being, even as hostilities towards those seen as not belonging increase.

Here I want to engage with three different spaces and moments, which exemplify how aspects like the moral economy, music and food coalesce to constitute my use of musicking, and to provide a platform for the performance of different aspects of being Zimbabwean. Evidently, these spaces and moments are multiple sites, which speak to similar aspects, whilst also providing specific understandings of conviviality, violence and policing and gender, amongst the myriad conceptualisations that can be generated.

Some of these moments also provide that suturing I have been referring to, of the historical and the contemporary, in the transformation of space and place in the midst of coloniality, and the persistence of joy despite violence, structural or otherwise. I am

thinking here of the *shebeen*, that informal and illegal space of conviviality, resurrected in episodes at Sanganai, and at these other spaces.

Each year, a group of DJs, artists and Zimbabweans come together for what is termed the Zim Cup Clash, a concept drawn from the sound clash of the sound systems popularised through dancehall music in Zimbabwe. This event sees many Zimbabweans gather to enjoy drink, music and the company of other Zimbabweans. In 2014, I found myself covering the clash, offering me another opportunity of an experience of Zim dancehall. This is one space and moment.

Another is a *gochi-gochi* I frequented with Mudhara Wala, Rollers Club, where on Sundays, Zimbabweans would come together to barbecue some meat, clink bottles and shake it on the dancefloor. It is at Rollers I saw Lady Squanda perform. The third is another *gochi-gochi*, in Eltham, which functions like Rollers Club, and which also offered me the opportunity to see some Zim-dancehall artists performing. Here I witnessed Zimbabwe-based Pah Chihera perform her hit song 'Runonzi Rudo', with Matthias Julius, then a UK-based Zimbabwean artist. She had done the song originally with Admire Musarurwa, who could not be present for the show, so Matthias became the replacement. I also got to see Sniper Storm, a Zim-dancehall artist, and Nduna, perform. Since then, many Zim-dancehall artists have graced shows in the UK.

As we navigate the city with different Zimbabweans, especially with Mudhara Wala and his cohort, I am made aware of the shifting patterns of musical performance and enjoyment. An unfortunate trend, tied to the larger challenges of precarity, has seen many live music venues close, and places like the Africa Centre that I refer to, that were once bastions of African music and artistic performance, and where the Limpopo Club was housed for many years, are closing down.

The myriad consequences that accompany the cries of gentrification and the expulsions, to borrow from Saskia Sassen, that this economy engenders, have not spared my experience of musicking in London. This is why what Zimbabweans have done in carving out spaces for enacting their homing desires, reaffirming community and their sense of being, is intriguing. Sara Cohen, in her study of mapping music and urban landscape in Liverpool, observes that there is increasing privatisation,

regulation and surveillance of city-centre areas. Black musicians pointed them to the racist policing and licensing policies that regulated and constrained black music making. Music-making for Cohen, what I am calling musicking, then, in Liverpool as with London, can be related to the city's position within the global political economy, and to events and trends that have influenced the restructuring not only of Liverpool but also of cities in other parts of the world (Cohen, 2012).

All three spaces/places that host these events are sports and leisure venues which, every other day, have people coming in for sport, exercise, physical rehabilitation and other health related activities. Whatever people come to these venues for during the week, one would not imagine that, at certain weekends, a sports club, or a basketball arena in a sports and leisure centre in Dunstable could be turned into a 'dancehall' a space where the walls and bodies within them reverberate with the sounds of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwean sounds) and concentrated within these walls are grammars that recall moments and places that are not the hegemonic jingoistic nationalism of the present. One would likely find the lingo, the colloquialisms, the slangs, the lyrics of Zim-dancehall booming out of the huge speakers, in a kombi in Harare, or any other suburb or township of Zimbabwe, than on this corner of Luton.

In addition to how the forms of conviviality that are imagined in these spaces change, an encounter with the police in Dunstable, and the accounts that were shared by some of the people attending the show pointed to a shift in how the space is also policed. Granted, there were skirmishes as certain people tried to push their way into the leisure centre, which, by that time, was already teeming with people, and over the safe capacity.

Maybe at this stage, I should give a bit of background to how I ended up at this gig in Dunstable. Having made many contacts through Sanganai and attending numerous Zimbabwean events, I bumped into a British man, in early 2014, who was working with some young Zimbabweans in an organisation trying to promote media exchange between those in Zimbabwe and in Britain. I decided that I would volunteer with him, as this would also offer me access to the different Zimbabwean events that the organisation would cover.

After meeting him at a Dele Sosimi event somewhere near Great Portland Street, and exchanging contacts, I happened to see him again a couple of weeks later at The Rich Mix in Shoreditch. We had a brief discussion where he suggested I come over to his place in Croydon. The following week, I caught a train to Croydon, and met him. Getting to his house, I thought twice about engaging with him, seeing the state of the mail at his door, the way things were scattered all over the place, and a general air of what I may call, for a lack of a better word, filth. Now I myself have been given to scattering things, but here, I was taken aback a bit, and had to consider quickly if I had to come up with an excuse. I didn't. I stayed, and we hashed out in what capacity I would be helping out. I was to return to this house at some point later, still struggling to find a place to sit, and trying to avoid the stained shits, I mean sheets, that were on his bed. Maybe I exaggerate my discomfort a bit, for effect. Suffice to say, he proved to be a very helpful contact, and provided me access to many events, the cup clash included. I was not, after all, a hygiene inspector, and there for understanding Zimbabwean experiences. Yet one cannot help but notice, for the eyes and the senses, in the 'field' are not censored to take in only the topic of one's work. My first journey to Croydon also ended up with me sitting on the train with William Burroughs' The Ticket That Exploded in hand, after donating a pound in the tin at the station counter. Fruitful would not be an unkind way of assessing the journey.

It is against this background then, that I found myself scurrying again to get to Croydon, and then to join the kind but scattered British man on the drive to Dunstable. He often drove like a demon, accelerating and then having to brake so suddenly that I thought the seatbelt would not hold me. I got the sense that I was always more invested in getting where we were going, burdened with the self-importance of my project, than he was to return alive to his sheet-stained flat. As I sat next to him in his van, the gardening equipment at the back, especially a rake, I think, kept jutting out from the corner of my eye. It was in the same van that was carrying cameras and audio equipment that we would be using to record the show and interview some people there. The things we do in the name of research. I can take comfort of course in the fact that there is worse, lives are threatened in many instances, and I was only afraid of being crashed into some car, or wall, or tree by a man whose full name or background I was yet to know. Even now, I am not too sure.

We arrived at the venue early, before any of the people who were organising the event were there. There will still people going in and out, and one family, when we walked in, was playing with their kids on the court, which I did not know then was going to be the venue for the show. We asked around for whoever was in charge and started setting up our equipment. I had been to the *gochi-gochi* places already, but I was still surprised by the venue of this show, which seemed to be a leisure centre in the middle of nowhere. I had to remember that many Zimbabwean events did not take place in central London, and that many factors, including size and cost, would be considered in looking for these venues. I was also to later understand that the people who organise these shows have, over the years of being in Britain, established relationships with the councils, or those in charge of the different venues, that would enable them to host such events. The scale of organisation that went into the show became apparent in talking to some of the organisers about obtaining permits for the Zimbabwean artists who would appear at these shows, permission to sell alcohol, and having to fend off the police, as I was to witness that night.

The fridges and other merchandise in the leisure centre had to be covered, and we had to take that into consideration as we began setting up. There was not much to set up. Just a couple of banners, and choosing spots for the tripod and interviews. My British friend, however, took himself very seriously, and was given to barking orders, in ways that tempted me to remind him that I was actually not his employee (read as euphemism for slave), and he was not my master. I gathered that maybe somewhere in his mind, the seed of that unbearable saviour complex had been planted and was being watered by all these sojourns and my presence and the project I was working on proved how invaluable people like him were to Zimbabweans. Yet I said nothing, biting my tongue, as I often did, not because I subscribed to that notion of some objective observation that I have already rejected, but because I selfishly saw these moments as ethnographic material, and did not want to ruin some of these attitudes by providing resistance, or a response. As someone who cannot yet read minds, and as Professor Xavier was not at hand to assist, I did not want to risk my access. My acquiescence was enough response to enable us to carry on. And on we went.

By the time the set up was in full force, and people started trickling in, I was being harangued to get people for interviews, to which I begrudgingly obliged. Partly, I was

somehow mortified to be standing in front of the lights and camera as if I was a 'real' journalist and asking important things, at least to me. I would also have preferred to just take pictures and talk to people, person-to-person, as I did later in the night. I was to begin at the tough end, it turned out.

Giant speakers went up, decks for the DJs were put on the stage and security took their position. As time went by, the bodies started swaying to the music, and the numbers increased. I had imagined the event to be popular, but not in the way it turned out. I had to fend off drunken people who would try to speak into the microphone as I was doing interviews, or jump on me and hug me and mumble inaudible things into my ear, assuming that I somehow shared their merriment at whatever point they were trying to make that I did not get. It was all part of the fun, the conviviality brought about by a space that has been physically transformed, and reminded one of the record evenings at boarding school, where often the dining hall was turned into the dancehall, and some 'disco' lights were brought in, although school policy dictated that lights be kept on, for many young boys were accused of groping, in the dark.

The lights were not similarly turned off at the leisure centre, and many complaints were murmured pertaining to the glaring leisure centre lights that made the place uncannily bright for dancehall, and provided me with the clearest view of 'community', if community refers to bodies that constantly sway and swerve towards each other, bump into each other and fall over laughing as the booze takes its toll. As a 'sober' participant, I found myself at certain instances getting irritated, wondering about the amount of cleaning the leisure club people would have to go through the next morning, and how much they charged for such a busy event, which cost a fair bit, upwards of 20 pounds, and must have made a fair sum for the organisers.

The main act for the night, Killer T, had been flown in from Zimbabwe, and was riding the Zimbabwean airwaves with a number of his songs. The story was that he had been a hwindi, a kombi conductor, and had found his fortune through dancehall. His story, like many other Zimdancehall artists, was coloured by the experience of Zimbabwean townships, self-confessed 'ghetto youths' and must have appealed across a demographic of Zimbabweans in Britain. His name sounds a lot like many Jamaican

artists, for instance Bounty Killer and Lukie D. The influence of reggae and dancehall on Zimbabweans is immense.

In the differences between these events, and two others that I attended, elements of class (and) performance are apparent in how such events were organised, the venues chosen, the prices for the tickets and the way they unfolded. What is also present here are the transnational connections that such artists continue to establish and reinforce, as they perform in Britain, Canada, Australia and the United States, among many places, and through their music, share an experience of Zimbabwe that resonates with some who constitute the 'diaspora' in these places, or are trying to construct an idea of home, of Zimbabwe, a place whose remnants of memory may be fast receding from their minds and experiences of Britain.

Most the people I talked to at this event seemed to have come to Britain post-2000, revealing those generational possibilities produced by the histories of Zimbabwean movement to Britain, and the politics that accompany the relationship between the two countries. Wala and I had attended a couple of dancehall performances together, but the general attendance revealed a younger audience with certain connections to a historical moment in which this music, Zim-dancehall, and the demographic it comes from, and speaks to, are current.

Around 1986, one of the biggest ever artists to come out of Zimbabwe, Thomas Mapfumo, had on his album a reggae song, 'Mugara Ndega', which features a chanting voice, not unlike those found in Jamaican reggae. As the doyen of Chimurenga music, Mapfumo playing reggae is one way of confirming how, in addition to having been a soundtrack of revolution and resistance in Britain, reggae also forged these transnational connections, and found a place in the Zimbabwean imaginary. As a vehicle of expressing the trials and tribulations of oppression, love, displacement, slavery, and being a general form of social commentary, it is no surprise that Zim-dancehall emanates from these 'ghetto' youths, and finds a place in the *gochi-gochis* and leisure centres where Zimbabweans who know the experience of dancehall reminisce, and perform, transform place and space to become their version of a momentary utopia, to be threatened by the ever-present policing of blackness and/as

alterity that invariably accompanies moments of carefree blackness, as if once again in the hold.

When Killer T graces the stage and churns out his hits, as I watch the crowd, people jumping up and down, spilling beers, falling over each other and singing along with him, I recognise the journey that these people, bodies that carry music and memory, have taken, to create these moments. It is when I remark on how drunk people are, how rowdy the place is getting, that someone says to me, "let these people enjoy themselves—they work very hard". I am aware. Keenly aware of the multiple shifts, back breaking jobs, humiliating moments that many go through daily, in order to send something back home. I am also refusing to think of their lives as these binaries of precarious work on one end and debauched nights on the other. Of course, a lot happens in the interstices. Births, deaths, weddings, separations. I am witness to some. In this moment, the music, the drink, the lure of the 'ghetto youths' is overarching, and the stories of 'diaspora' that circulate amongst some, the cautionary tales of being driven mad by work and loneliness and drink, come to mind. As one friend remarked, they had been surprised the first time they went to the leisure centre for one of the gigs, before I came to Britain. They told me they had asked themselves, is this the UK that people talk about. It had felt to him like a bar in Mufakose, where he comes from, one of the high-density areas of Harare. Was it not the UK then, because it reminded him of Zimbabwe? Or like all these other spaces I explore, the thrust was to actually create an environment, whether by design, or inadvertently, through a dislocated and realigning habitus, to appropriate Bourdieu, that mimics home, Zimbabwe, Mufakose, or any other place, in this space in Dunstable?

I have been talking, in the leisure centre, to many young Zimbabwean women, who are telling me about their clothes, how far they have come to enjoy the dancehall. This is an opportunity for them to get away from home. Many have come with their brothers or boyfriends, or other young women. Some laugh uproariously about their parents finding out about the show and what they were wearing, and still let me take pictures and video footage of them. Dancehall is often accompanied by certain movements of the body, which in the hegemonic understanding of the Zimbabwean moral economy, especially the religious one, would be regarded as outrageous. A young woman, her backside firmly planted on the groin of the man behind her,

gyrating to the music is an image that often sends many scurrying to change channels, look away, or increase the volume of the conversation. Attendant to this is also an understanding of gender performance and the policing of young women's sexual identities, which becomes heightened in this elsewhere, filled with the cautionary tales of adopting 'Western' lifestyles and the threats of forgetting where one comes from.

I am conflicted. I am not here to be an arbiter of these moral economies, nor to pass any kind of judgement, but part of me cannot resist acknowledging the commonality of this experience amongst young Zimbabwean women I talk to, be it in the context of the church, like Catherine, or those attending the cup clash, that they find this policing of their bodies unproductive, and that the double standard in how they are expected to behave in comparison to their male counterparts is stark. Obviously, there are numerous factors that shape the experience of masculinity and femininity for these Zimbabweans as I reiterate throughout. The heterogeneity of the constitution of the Zimbabwean 'diaspora' as an always emergent experience and process means that various moral economies, similar and different, function simultaneously, albeit in different spaces, at different times, and vice versa. Catherine's presence in the church subjects her to a different moral economy, as does the presence of the young women at the cup clash. However, in both instances, a hegemonic understanding of what it means to be a proper Zimbabwean woman operates, hence the comments expressed by some I showed the footage of the cup clash to about how these young women must be high, and embarrass their families by engaging in such behaviour.

The unfortunate violence I encountered, the pushing and shoving and eventually flying fists, was regarded by some of the organisers as a misplaced attempt by those instigating the fighting to show that 'they have balls'. They would go on to add, "*manje pano hapasi pekupengera" (*this is not the place for them to be insane). It seemed there were some who had a reputation at such events, of *marambadoro*. *Marambadoro* in Shona refers to a condition in which, often men, lose their moral compass after consuming alcohol. They lend themselves to behaviour regarded as immoral and unacceptable, and this is often accompanied by violence. There are tales of the man who is refused by alcohol and always ends up abusing their wife, and even beating up their mothers! This *marambadoro*, like the music and the understanding of being

Zimbabwean, seems to have made the journey to Britain, and was sitting comfortably in the bodies of some in Dunstable. The performance that accompanies alcohol consumption was discomforting and as I highlight in some of my experiences, I was not immune to the slobbering, spit in my face, rowdy behaviour that comes with alcohol consumption in some of these moments. Although I was present in instances when some skirmishes occurred, I was happy to wear my anthropological hat, and keep my teeth! Coward you say, but I kept my smile! Maybe my discomfort with the transgressive drunkenness is evidence of my imbibing of a politics of respectability, of the moral economy (Fumanti, 2010; Fumanti & Werbner, 2010); a fear of abandon and being carefree, an awareness that the elsewhere is a policed place, these are marked bodies. I find myself thinking, like the priest at Zimbabwean mass, what about the police/surveillance? Your record? People can be deported. What will people at home in Zimbabwe say when they watch this? Is this Britain, this drunkenness, or what led Oliver Mtukudzi to sing 'Nhava', telling the story of those who return empty handed from their foray into the diaspora. Much like Mr. Phiri, from Nashil Pichen Kazembe's 'A-Phiri Anabwera', who returns home from the city empty-handed only to find that no-one in his village remembers him and his close relatives have long died (Maurice T Vambe, 2008).

During my fieldwork, as well as outside it, there were several reported cases of accidents in which Zimbabweans had been involved in, and the rumours that circulated suggested they were alcohol related. Another unfortunate side of the consumption of alcohol and the violence that sometimes followed was how it invited the police, who, as many commented, were always eager to clamp down on events such as the cup clash because of the overwhelming presence of young black people. Locating Zimbabweans as part of historical genealogy of black presence in Britain offers several examples of the relationships between the police and the black and Asian communities in Britain.

Zim-dancehall is a constant thread through the different moments, and foregrounds the shifting nature of transnational circulations of Zimbabwean music and culture, especially the possibility of class-based understandings of musicking.

The other space I want to attend to here is a *gochi-gochi* place called Rollers Club. I first heard of Rollers Club when I was in South Africa. As evident in this conversation, a part of my experience of transnationality, and the Zimbabwean circulation of bodies, of people and music, also includes the Zimbabwe, South Africa, Britain triad. Rollers was then in the news for hosting the former African National Congress youth leader, now leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters of South Africa, Julius Malema, on one of his visits to the UK. He was at Rollers apparently at the invite of the people in charge there, and to talk about the importance of black economic empowerment.

Rollers is a 'pan-African' place, catering not just for Zimbabweans, but for people from different African countries. I met a Kenyan man, just as I had at Sanganai, who told me his name was Mwangi. He looked like he was in his late 40s, early 50s, was always smartly dressed in colourful shirts and usually with a golden chain around his neck. The first time we met we exchanged a few words of the little Swahili I know, and I tried to show off bits of Kenyan history I know and the parallels between Kenya and Zimbabwe, the Mau Mau, Mzee Kenyatta and facing Mount Kenya, issues around ethnicity, Ngugi and of course '*Kanindo*' music, which has influenced Zimbabwean music, from the sounds of the late Simon 'Chopper' Chimbetu, and the then Marxist Brothers with their *dendera* music, Kasongo Band, and the contemporary *sungura* of bass maestro Alick Macheso.

In line with my attempt at exorcising the ghosts of polarised, binary inundated Zimbabwean politics, I steered away from explicit politics in such spaces, as I did at Sanganai. I do remember, on one occasion, talking to someone who was involved with Rollers, and disagreeing with their defence of the Zimbabwean government. They expressed their vehement support and agreement with the government of Zimbabwe, and I could not resist disagreeing with them, and we left the conversation with him promising to send me some documents that would highlight the economic blueprint of the government, in order to 'educate' me on how things worked in Zimbabwe. I thought I would scratch this political itch, so I went on to add him on Facebook, to which he did not respond in a while, and I withdrew the invite. I recognised, when I met him later at Rollers, that I might have hit a raw nerve when I disagreed with his political views, and even when we greeted one another, there was this lingering discomfort, emanating from our previous encounter that had suggested strong

divergences on how we thought about Zimbabwean politics. I thought there might have been room for convergence, and that there may be room for further conversation, but I decided to stop scratching this itch. Although I am not a card-carrying member of the staying objective and an observer party, I am well aware of the unfortunate politics that have bedevilled Zimbabwe, having lived through and witnessed the consequences. The last thing I wanted was to be tagged in ways that would limit my access to certain spaces, and associate me with any particular political end.

One struggles here with the ethics of occupying such spaces, and of silence when one is confronted with position that are not just at odds with theirs, but those they find deplorable and deserving of rebuttal. I was to find myself, as I have pointed out elsewhere, in similar situations, where I would not intervene directly, or speak up, so as not to align myself with political views that would jeopardise my position as a researcher. It was, as Sara Ahmed writes (Ahmed, 2014), like hitting one's head against a wall, and swelling up inside, because I had chosen to do this very work on living elsewhere, because of the kinds of dislocation and displacement that came with what came to be known as the 'Zimbabwean situation'. To then be engaged in conversations that deny, if not the traditional push/pull factors, then the political complexities of such 'forced migration', especially because of political party allegiances, can be infuriating! The undercurrent of this politics thus runs through, and imbues, these spaces and places of musicking. Variously, codes and modes of discussing Zimbabwe and its politics, and the choice of music played in these different spaces, at least when I was present, bears testimony to a kind of musical policing and moral economy, within which those present perform innocuous (non)political identity, and try to emphasise the fact that *tiri pano kuti tinakirwe, kwete kut titaure politics. Siyanai na Mugabe* (we are here to enjoy ourselves, not to talk politics. Don't bother with Robert Mugabe).

Whereas I had had the experience of the braai in South Africa, I was introduced by Wala to the *gochi-gochi*, the Zimbabwean version of the barbecue that is so popular that it was even made into a song, *gochi-gochi*, by Jah Prayzah. Rollers as a space firmly intersects elements such as food, family, music and the performance of masculinity, status and the various constructions of home and belonging. As a place that opens in

the afternoon on Sundays during the summer, Rollers advertises itself as a place that caters to families, focusing on the meat and the sadza. It also transforms itself into a space for music and dance later in the night, as DJs play, and artists are also sometimes invited to perform. It is at Rollers that I witnessed Lady Squanda perform. On Lady Squanda, I have to highlight the power of transnational connections in shaping musical performance and Zimbabwean being in Britain.

Some context first. In the midst of 2016, Zimbabwe started going through one of the most pronounced periods of civilian unrest and resistance to the Zimbabwean government. Social media, already crucial in the virtual constructions of Zimbabweanness, providing a space for constructing home online, was similarly important in the sharing of news of what is happening at home. Within this same period, Lady Squanda was caught in a scandal in which a video was circulated, showing her harassing a local comedian in Zimbabwe for making fun of her. In the video, the comedian is seated in the back of the car, and is slapped several times and asked to apologise, and is eventually asked by Squanda to lick her leg as a sign of his supplication. The cowered young man is seen hesitating, and is slapped again, after which he hesitantly extends his tongue and licks her foot. The video, in an environment in which Zimbabweans were already incensed with the injustices occurring in the country, was met with heavy criticism of Lady Squanda. This led to the organisers of some shows that she was meant to perform at in the UK in the summer of 2016 to cancel her tours in response to the outrage, and to replace her with the comedian, and other artistes. Lady Squanda, previously loved and mobbed by women at the show I had attended for her rejection of respectable femininities, became a villain, the onslaught fronted through social media. This incident provides a very useful insight into how, even though her performances I had witnessed were not overtly political, she was, in a highly polarised political context, exhibiting characteristics regarded as akin to the political system that had seen many leave Zimbabwe, for the now diaspora. This moral economy, operating both in Zimbabwe and its diaspora, sought to emphasise that Zimbabweans would not enjoy the music and performances of someone who was flagrantly flouting the tenets around basic human decency, respect and human rights, and was allegedly using her position in relation to the political establishment to get away with such behaviour.

I have said at the beginning that there are ghosts that, even as we try to exorcise them, continue to haunt us. This might be one of them. Without setting out to explore overt politics, one finds themselves, on this meandering road, confronted with how conviviality, musicking and that resilience of spirit and refusal to die, even when such bodies, as Teju Cole argues, are regarded unmournable, is the performance of the political, in the everyday. Maybe not every day per se, but indeed, in the taken for granted. Such episodes, as the Lady Squanda scandal, serve as reminders of the structural realities within which musicking obtains, and that this performance of Zimbabwe in the elsewhere, the efforts at making place, and negotiating belonging, shape and are shaped by larger political realities. The very inception of the identifications build on historically produced ideas of these nations, Zimbabwe and Britain, invites, even if not blatantly stated, a politics that runs through the negotiation of being, but is not, and should not necessarily be regarded as overarching.

The combination of food and music is an important one, especially in relation to the excursion into affect and emotion, considering how both music and food engage with the senses. A conversation on food alone would be a fascinating one, which I here shelve for a separate piece of work outside this thesis. I would, however, like to make a few remarks on how these two, music and food, intersect in this space to produce an imaginary of home that involves the body in motion.

On arriving at the gates to the sports club, one would either pay the £5 charge for entry whilst in the car, or they would park, and be followed by the security to make sure that they had paid. Some occasions found us, that is myself and Wala, being let in when one of the guys who was said to run the place was around, because Mudhara Wala is well connected, and when you are well connected, I guess you don't always have to pay such cover charges—our fortunate version of being on a *gochi-gochi* guest list.

Whilst people bought meat, barbecued and chatted about life, there were those who would be selling some Zimbabwean products, especially foods that are strongly associated with home. There was one man who would sell from his car boot, who, after I expressed interest in looking at Zimbabweans in Britain and their food practices in relation to home, identity and belonging, told me he also had a shop and

would be willing to share with me his experiences. I am yet to get there. There was also the guy who would set up a small table outside the door into the sports club, and would sell things like *maputi* and *masau*. I had first seen him as the other one who sold from the back of his car, at Sanganai, pulling behind him a huge suitcase. I was to learn later from Wala that this suitcase contained his merchandise, such as t-shirts emblazoned with the Zimbabwean flag and other paraphernalia relating to Zimbabwe. I had thought then that he was someone moving houses, and in my eyes, seemed unwell. Even when I bought some of his merchandise and exchanged brief pleasantries with him, he often seemed spent. He was quite tall, walked with a tired gait, and always had a cap on. His clothes hung on his very thin body, and I asked Wala if he was alright several times. Without wanting to be invasive about his life, the brief anecdotes I got suggested that he had fallen on hard times a while back, and had been, so to say, marching to his own tune. What about family? I asked. Things were blurry. After not seeing him for a while, Wala told him that he had been found dead at his place. Another ghost that haunts us, that inevitable abjection that one has to confront in the story of the elsewhere. Death and abjection.

I attended to two unfortunate incidents of death in the field, which, as many of the other instances, just went to show how this space, place, time, experience, these diasporic journeys and experiences, this thing, the field, is never life in stasis and I could not control much, for seeking to observe and participate in and observe life simultaneously, even without acknowledgement, includes the death that accompanies life. In some sense, social death was always present, a social death that is not only present on the outside as observed, but as a social death I similarly live with. To observe lives tagged as migrant, black and other may be to observe oneself. Those hints of the auto-ethnographic and writing oneself through others. Death as physical, however, confronts one with the forms of grieving that pronounce affect and emotion.

With Wala, I attended a memorial for a young woman who had passed away from a cancer at a young age. Her father was Zimbabwean, and had grown up with Wala's generation in Britain. The mother was British, and had been equally active in the African music scene. There were musical performances at The Forge in Camden, by different artists, paying tribute to this young woman. I was one of the 'strangers' in

the space, not knowing many people there, and trying to find my place in the milieu. I was also awkward as to how to behave around the mother and sister of the deceased, who were present, as I shuffled between demurely moving to the music and trying to show my sympathy with those around. It was a celebration, but it brought into relief the transitory nature of the field and bodies in the field, and that the conviviality that is attendant to musicking is also carried on in moments of atrophy. This generational and generative pan-African community came together, and in mourning, used the platform that had brought them together in their early years in Britain: music. Mourning and celebration became intertwined and I uncomfortably was company to that, squeezing in and out of the spaces I was allowed into.

I also became part of a programme run by an organisation that was then called Diaspora Changemakers. The programme sought to bring together people in the African diaspora in the UK to network, share knowledge and skills, and possibly work on projects that would contribute to improving communities in the UK or their countries of origin. Through this programme, I met a young British-Zimbabwean woman who had gladly agreed to assist me with my research. She had been born and grew up in London, and identified as Zimbabwean. I was to start spending time with her and her group of friends to gain a better understanding of her current 'social circles'. I was invited to her place, and met some of her friends and her brother as the initial entry into her space and I hurriedly left to go meet up with Wala, with the intention that we would continue when she returned from a vacation she was going on. A short while later, I was to learn from Wala that a Zimbabwean woman they had grown up with in London had passed. He would be going to pass his condolences, so if I wanted to go with him and meet some of his generation, I was welcome. On asking who this woman was, Wala mentioned her name, and her children and where she lived, to which I exclaimed that I might know the daughter. As it turned out, this young woman I was going to work with was the daughter to a Zimbabwean of Wala's generation, who was now late. I went with Wala.

It was a similarly awkward scenario, where I found myself passing condolences to a young woman and her family, who I was just getting to know and hoped to work with in ways that were slightly removed from death and grieving. There was no music on this particular occasion, although I would imagine I need not reiterate how I ended up

at this particular moment because of my exploration of musicking and Zimbabweans in London. That thread that ties musicking to life, it turned out, also tied it to death. I wondered then what it meant to sing, to dance and to die in the elsewhere, and to be entombed in a land that, as per Shona tradition, would not have the anthills in which the umbilical cords of your forbearers were buried.

I am giving these accounts of encountering death in the field, in social and physical forms, of others to buttress the experience of seeing the tall skinny man with the cap selling his wares, and next to be informed of his death. In this space where I am trying to make sense of place-making, of people who may feel displaced and dislocated, searching for a fixedness, a stability—that intersects music and food, and memory and being are reinvigorated through the consumption of such things as *maputi* bringing people to talking about their life in Zimbabwe, in school, of when *maputi* and *masau* were consumed—yet death still stalks. At least I understood, partly, that the intricacies of being Zimbabwean in Britain, of witnessing the conviviality at Rollers, of being called a '*musalad*' and placed on a hierarchy of Zimbabwean being, belied complexities that defy a simple binary of life and death, for even then, places that many struggle to call home, become home to their bodies, and give names to their life and being in death, on tombstones and bureaucratic records—that might designate one as human—yet whilst their bodies and beings pined for that space and place, they remained strangers. Stability, belonging and fixedness was found, it seems for the tall man, in the grave.

For those who remained living, at least as far as my eye could see, and our, assuming I share with some a conception of what was the real then. I did exist somewhere on a hierarchy in these spaces, as a *mafikizolo*, as a *musalad*, or as one incident suggested, someone, something else, on the margins of what others regard as the centre. I had arrived, like any other Sunday at rollers, and with Wala bought some meat for the barbecue. Whilst Wala caught up with some familiar faces, I did what level of barbecuing I knew how. After I had been in a tussle with the fire and smoke for a while, and I had worked up a bit of a sweat, a young man, dark and shiny, as generously embodied as that other one from church, with a bunch of keys dangling from one hand and some meat in another suddenly appeared besides me. I have asked several Zimbabweans, as someone who doesn't drive, about this habit of people

always holding their car keys in their hand. I noticed as I quickly glanced at him that the key was for a Mercedes. He gestured with the meat towards me and towards the barbecue, and said "*Gocha nyama iyi fast fast, ndine nzara shamwari*, I need to eat something", or something to that effect. He was basically asking me to barbecue the meat for him because he was hungry! I just looked at him blankly, at which moment he might have realised his mistake, and another guy who was barbecuing meat next to me immediately jumped in to explain it was him who was doing the meat for those who would pay him £5. I was annoyed at the confidence with which he had made an assumption and was barking orders at me, and sure enough, my face showed it. How dare he confidently come and assume I was barbecuing meat for other people here? I am a researcher, hear me, I am a researcher, I thought. Well, I have barbecued meat working at the Notting Hill Carnival for four years, and if he had met me there, he would have been within his rights to assume I was doing the same here.

What was it about his assumption that irked me in this space? Part of me felt that I was trying to resist and reject the kinds of hierarchies I was aware of, being associated with a particular socio-economic standing. At a material level, I would say I am part of a precarious category, if I were to get into a box. Interestingly, I was also convinced of my own position of being 'in the field', being a participant who was also a keen observer, which, however, did not stop people like the dark shiny guy from making their own assumptions about how I exist as an insider, and my position therein. Even if I would have wanted to be considered an insider in a space that I was just getting accustomed to, it would happen, it seemed, on the terms of those holding the gaze, not me.

Again, the heterogeneity of being Zimbabwean, of this 'community' that came together each Sunday and the hierarchies that exist within become just another fault in the kinds of fractures that Dominic Pasura refers to within the Zimbabwean diaspora.

In contrast to the spaces I have been engaging with above, I want to provide a brief exploration of two events that construct a different understanding of being Zimbabwean, although some people move between the spaces of the *gochi-gochi* and the hotel function rooms and glittering spaces that shout 'Afropolitan'.

Here I am bound to make segue-ways into the kinds of consumptive identities that constituted my initial research interests, before music turned more persuasive. It is also an opportunity to reiterate the generational connections and refusal of abjection. In addition to the convivial and largely informal spaces like Sanganai and Rollers, Zimbabweans also meet each year at the Zimbabwean Achievers Awards, an event that celebrates the achievements of Zimbabweans from different sectors.

With that speeding British man with garden forks and lawn mowers at the back of his truck, we headed for a swanky hotel in Kensington for the May 2014 Zimbabwe Achievers awards. This time around, he had purchased a new truck in anticipation of his 'African adventures', and he was to ship this new truck for ease of transport. It was a relief to expect to be in a cleaner vehicle, although that did not mean he had slowed down!

It was decided, considering that he would be coming from Croydon, that I would find my way and meet him there. I had no qualms with not being in his speeding vehicle. I arrived early and walked into the hotel to ask for the specific venue. As I entered the room where the event was being hosted, I suddenly felt underdressed. I was semi-formal, not being an owner of a tuxedo or a bow tie myself. The people around me looked trim, their shiny garments and fitted suits reflecting off the shiny surfaces of the mirrors and the cutlery on the tables. I usually joke about how I avoid shiny places if I can, mostly because I imagine the size of the hole left in my pocket would be irreparable, and some kinds of precarity are difficult to return from.

I milled around, talked to one or two of the people I recognised, and decided to go and have a drink with Matthias Julius, the Zimbabwean singer. We talked, and we both realised we had met some time back at Hootananny in Brixton, when the Zimbabwean band Heritage Survival were performing. We had exchanged a cursory greeting then, and I had gone back to hang out with Wala, and some of the Zimbabwean guys who were present. Heritage Survival, I was told, was led by someone who used to play with Thomas Mapfumo, Zivanai.

I have already referred in previous sections to the music of Thomas Mapfumo and its movements. Here the mobilities of those who played with him are also part of the

story of Zimbabweans in the elsewhere and reveal the kinds of politics that have historically shaped, and continue to shape, musicking in Zimbabwe and its diaspora. I managed to watch Heritage Survival perform at several venues, including at the Oliver Mtukudzi and Sulumani Chimbetu show. One of the places I saw them perform is Mama Jumbe's in Forest Gate. Following similar intersections of food, drink, music and general conviviality, Mama Jumbe is another place where Zimbabweans and many other Africans come together and participate in creating, circulating and reinforcing experiences and understandings of being Zimbabwean. Heritage Survival and Anna Mudeka, I was informed, used to perform with Thomas Mapfumo. Mapfumo in exile, and singing to critique Zimbabwean politics, and decrying the betrayal of the liberatory ethos espoused by the Zimbabwean regime. Zivanai has a song that circulated in the second half of 2016, about the protests and unrest in Zimbabwe, and the repression by government of protesters and other dissenting voices.

I had seen Matthias perform some of his songs at Mama Jumbe's in Forest Gate and at Hootananny in Brixton, where he was supporting Heritage Survival. He sang some of his songs, which are predominantly reggae, particularly close to the Jamaican understanding of lover's rock. His music mixes Shona and English and addresses the typical themes of love. His performance of reggae can also be seen here, as with Zim-dancehall as further evidence of the influence of Caribbean music amongst Zimbabweans, in the diaspora and in Zimbabwe.

Back to Zimbabwe Achievers Awards, Matthias was telling me about his music, and about some work that he had also been doing. He was not sure if he would be performing that evening as it was yet to be confirmed, but like me, he was in casual clothes: jeans, sneakers, a t-shirt and jacket, which turned out to be his usual style whenever I had seen him. Whilst we worked on the beers, I received a call from the speeding British man that he had arrived and I had to come assist in setting up. Knowing very well that I would not appreciate being bandied about, I decided to take my time, and finish our beers. By the time we got back to the hotel, there were more people in attendance, and the process of taking photographs, trying to ask people for interviews, and generally scurrying around had started. By the end of the night, my feet would be sore, stomach rumbling, and patience worn thin. In the meantime, we

were to try and capture the colour and spirit of recognising and honouring Zimbabweans in the diaspora and at home for their efforts.

I had earlier been talking to Mudhara Wala, trying to find out if he would be attending. He was supposed to be on the guest list, or to get a guest ticket as he was nominated for something. The awards ceremony also aims at acknowledging the historical work and presence of Zimbabweans in Britain, including work in music. I ran around trying to find out from some of the organisers if he was on any list. I had little currency anyway, myself being at the event by virtue of volunteering to help cover it, and as access to a space that could prove insightful for my work. This meant we had no table catering for us, whether to sit at, or for food or even water, which is why I spent most of the night standing or walking around, and without eating. There was little consolation in that I got to dance a bit to some of the music, especially when Prudence Katomeni Mbofana, who was prominent in my childhood years because of her role in the movie More Time, and her hit song 'BP', got on stage to perform.

One of the young men I had met at the cup clash, something Joe (my prejudice shows!), was also present and performing. I found his mimicry of American artists a bit jarring, and even in trying to interview him, I was cursing myself that volunteering to cover such events meant sometimes having to talk to such 'artists'. I could not help passing judgement in my thoughts. In the 'age of Obama' as Paul Gilroy (2014) has explored, there has been an historical exportation of African- American (as American) culture, that sells the ideas of consumption and freedom, cultivating forms of dress, performance and other identitarian aspects. This was present in what something Joe seemed to be trying to convey, albeit in a somewhat caricatured way. I took some pictures and quickly moved on.

I went on to talk to women who were being recognised for running a community support group for women who were victims of domestic violence, as well as creating a platform for Zimbabwean women to address the various challenges they face in this elsewhere. I interviewed one of the organisers, who expressed his pleasure at the way the event was organised, and how it had grown over the years. There was lots of encouragement from different people that Zimbabweans in Britain should get involved in their different capacities in contributing to the well-being of the

Zimbabwean community. I recognised the existence of certain forms of solidarity, yet, as Benedict Anderson argued, community, from my observations, was something more imagined.

Although hungry and tired, I ended up on the dancefloor dancing to the music of Prudence Katomeni at the end of the night, with the glitz and glamour complete, the accomplishments of Zimbabweans recognised.

At the end of 2013 I went to a farewell event at a hotel somewhere near Tottenham Court Road, invited through Wala. The event was for a British-Zimbabwean artist, by then well-known as part of a group that had received much attention and fame. It was a similarly glitzy space, and I lingered on the fringes of the main event, being introduced to different people. It was clear that the majority of people belonged to Wala's generation, and their children and relatives. In this space, the performance of hierarchy was somewhat similar to that at Zim Achievers, although I witnessed what I regarded as the existence of both an openness and exclusivity, where someone like me (not connected to anyone there in any substantive way except Wala) had access, without understanding what I was exactly there for, and leaving feeling as if I had trespassed. This, of course, says nothing about the event, but more about my own perceptions and the sense of being an outsider, which, for all intents and purposes, I was. This was at the 'beginning' of my official period of fieldwork, and I was then not sure how this played out in comparison to the other spaces I had already been, and in terms of how I wanted to explore music and being. I am still not sure it finds home in this instance. It is part of that ethnographic sense making, of suturing the fragmented and non-linear experiences. Suffice to say, I am interested here in how such spaces construct and reinforce who belongs where, shaped by time, relationships and possibly taste. I sat somewhere on the continuum of might be in with a chance of understanding this space and the people within it to having no clue of what was occurring. In the end, I left with Wala, as I had come in. I had comprehended something about cancer, the auction of some fashion and a vintage car, and a move to the stardom of Los Angeles. I just thought I had to go back home in read some Charles Bukowski , as some kind of antidote! There was also a desiring, to borrow from Bob Marley, for songs of redemption, a redeeming form the kinds of 'afropolitan' and consumptive ways of being Zimbabwean that I was distant from.

It is this desire for redemption, of a different kind, that finds some in the church, as the following section engages with. Hopefully one can see here, from the foregoing instances, the kinds of hierarchies of being Zimbabwean that are reconfigured by the different places and spaces of musicking, and the ensuing performances. I felt, despite the differences in the nature of the events and the claims made, that there remained a present claiming of space across the board, a refusal to submit to abjection, evidenced in the kinds of oppositional, yet still defiant, kinds of frivolity that ensue.

## Zvesvondo[21]: A Case of Religion and Musicking in the Zimbabwean Diaspora

In George Lamming's *In The Castle Of My Skin*, the characters of Old Pa and Old Ma represent a different understanding of the meaning of the land. Old Pa, with seemingly vestigial memories of slavery and journeying ships, has a stronger relationship to a politics and imaginary of the land; Old Ma, on the other hand, is convinced, in a fervent religious way, that their promised land is in heaven. This fervent belief provides comfort, and a seeming resolution to the dissonance of inhabiting a space, as descendants of slaves, as a diaspora, that seeks their expulsion. Another elsewhere becomes a way of reconciling displacement and dislocation, both as historical, and in the present. Unable to hold onto the physicality of place and territory, belonging extends further beyond the corporeal (Lamming, 1991).

I invoke these moments, narrated by G, the ironically named, yet somehow nameless protagonist of 'In the Castle of My Skin', because of some of the experiences I have had encountering religion and religious spaces amongst Zimbabweans in London. In many ways, I have had to confront my own dissonance in how I understand and perceive religion, and how it 'functions' in spaces where there are attempts to recreate community, and to find voice and hope, as well as celebration of being, amidst images of abjection, and sometimes exclusion. It is also a significant point that I will return to because of intersections of coloniality, religion, diaspora and transnationality.

The coalescence of Zimbabweans in this moment around religion is not an exception, as the many understandings of diaspora shows (Brubaker, 2005, 2009; R. Cohen, 2008), and as evidenced in many other African and black diasporas (Gilroy, 1993a; Harris, 2006). Of interest to this conversation are the practices and manifestations of religious being that are shaped by general shifts in migration trends from Zimbabwe, and the socio-political and economic climate of both Zimbabwe and Britain. These religious spaces, similar to others I have encountered whilst in Britain, offer, in the words of some, an exercise of being black and Zimbabwean outside (yet inside) the

[21] Zvesvondo is the title of a newsletter circulated amongst the congregants of the Zimbabwean Catholic Community with news of events and other related information. Svondo is also the Shona word for Sunday, and is regularly used to refer to the Church, in relation to the day people usually attend church in Zimbabwe, on a Sunday.

usual white gaze and modes of policing the black body and its performance, as well as the tropes of morality and the noble savage that subtly shape self and other perceptions. Within a space that is increasingly hostile (read more as a return to, and a baring of always existing undercurrents) to bodies regarded as alien, the church, as traditionally perceived, can become a refuge, and a way of performing and being the "noble savage". I may be alien, but at least I have a strict moral code, and am not a threat, it seems to say. That is one reading. There certainly is a sense of ownership, belonging and even subversion that exists, in how syncretic practices continue, and cosmologies are intertwined, convenient and punctuated.

Zimbabwean diaspora congregations, in the words of Pasura, can be described as centres and spaces of religious and cultural reaffirmation and reinvention—a contemporary transnational extended family. They offer a platform for community solidarity and spiritual comfort, in addition to being some form of security against social exclusion, deportation and eventualities such as death. Pasura's work on Zimbabwean Catholics in Britain demonstrates the intersections among religion, diaspora, race, gender, identity and the numerous negotiations of being in the elsewhere.

A young Zimbabwean like Catherine, who shared with me her experiences of religion and musicking in Britain, in how she expresses herself, is aware of straddling these moral economies, and performing these multiple modes of being, to enable her body, and her sense of being, to be 'fit for purpose' in the different spaces that she occupies. In inhabiting a place, a city, whose perceived overarching morality is often construed as being at odds with being a 'proper Zimbabwean', the ways in which religion becomes a way of claiming territory, a moral place and space is useful to consider.

Religious identities/identifications can thus be viewed as part of a broader spectrum of ways of crafting legitimacy, (dis)integrating, and in the most complex of things, yet simplest of expressions, refusing to die, as body and being. Some Zimbabweans sing, pray and eat together, locating their bodies here and there, as reaffirming a particular understanding of being Zimbabwean and Catholic; they also locate themselves, like Lamming's Old Ma, in the possibilities of the hereafter, of an ethereal domicile, as well as a return to Zimbabwe, in practice, and in the imaginary. If musicking and the

conviviality accompanying it are a way of refusing abjection and social death, then religion and musicking present interesting tensions and contradictions, converging and diverging in several strands, and lending to the life of a young Zimbabwean woman the vicissitudes of the elsewhere, negotiating 'respectable femininity' whilst inhabiting a black female body that is subject to a structural and lived 'disrespect'.

## Zimbabwean and Catholic in Britain

Around December of 2012, I attended my first Catholic church service, part of a mini-ethnography project that we had been tasked to do as a section of a research methods class. I was still very green, finding my way around London, and access to the church was provided through members of my extended family, who have been in Britain for a while longer than I have. To say I attended the service for the purposes of the mini-ethnography is not entirely true, because I had been invited by family, as a way of introducing me to the Zimbabwean Catholic community, and as I was to also recognise, grounding me in some idea of the continuities of an idea of home. My regular attendance of church service would be commended on, as was that of many other young Zimbabweans, as evidence of holding onto 'our faith', not forgetting where we have come from, as well as resisting the allure of other churches seen as more 'exciting' by the young, because they play different kinds of music, and have "*magitare nemaband muchurch"* (guitars and full bands in church), which apparently is too much fun!

On this particular day, I arrived in Northampton to a meeting of *vanababa*, the fathers. I sat around, feeling alien, drifting in and out of the conversations that were taking place. The conviviality in the space, though I had not yet encountered Sanganai bar at Zimbabwe house, is reminiscent of the bar in many ways. During the service, songs were sung in Shona and Ndebele, and the tone and character of the sermon, the uniforms worn by the women and men, recreated an image of the Catholic community in Zimbabwe. Like many of the sermons I was to attend, it was long, and I found myself fidgeting, especially because I was still adjusting to the cold of this new place. I sat there wondering to myself how these people had the time and patience to sit through these long sermons. Was there nothing else they would be rather doing? Some of the sermons in Zimbabwe can be equally long, but I had imagined that those in Britain, where people had multiple 'shifts' to go to, and life was faster, would be shorter. I

would also later understand the importance of these sermons, not in themselves, but as these spaces for reinforcing not only the moral fortitude I have referred to, but also the relationships between groups of men and women, cohorts of the young who have shared the experience of being Zimbabwean in Britain, and even gossip, as congregants whisper about a scandal, or the latest news coming out of Zimbabwe. The realities of shift work meant that friends and relatives do not see each other as much as they want, making the occasions when they could make it to church a significant aspect of diasporic sociality. Granted, many maintained contact in the meantime through church WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms, an issue I engage with later in looking at 'virtual diasporas'.

Thus started my journey into exploring the place that religion occupies, and how religious songs and spaces become part of a larger repertoire of place-making. My main 'site' if one may call it that, was at a parish in Stoke Newington, where Zimbabwean Catholics meet on the first Saturday of the month. Here I should make a point about the 'ethnographic site'. I entered the church space, as pointed out, not as an ethnographer per se, but as a young Zimbabwean migrant hailing from a Catholic family. My relationship to the space and the people, as is evident, and remarked on elsewhere, exists already outside any discernible parameters of a field. I also reiterate this to acknowledge how I embody a being Zimbabwean and not-so-Catholic in Britain that is already made, yet is also nascent and emergent as someone who, in this moment of being part of the various church episodes, remains a *mafikizolo* as Frank called me; someone who moves in and out of the group and observes from within, whilst at the same time imagining from without.

The monthly gathering in Stoke Newington is not just for the sermons, but also for the stomach, as there is food available afterwards in a small hall at the back of the church and different Zimbabwean dishes are served. I often would have to leave a bit of space after lunch for all the delicious food that different designated groups and guilds take turns to make and provide each month. One can find servings of *sadza, guru, matumbu*, rice and beans, *muriwo*, and other culinary delights that smell and taste of the different versions of Zimbabwe that people have. Often, the meals would be washed down with some soft drinks on sale, a coke, or fanta, some ginger beer, or just water. I don't remember finding any alcohol. Except at the Christmas parties, where many

took off the cloaks of formality, and could drink and be merry. Christmas parties, it seems, are often the undoing of many of the lofty standards to which others are held, at least for that moment. The moral economy can get reactivated the day after, in a way very similar to the scattering of bodies on a Sunday morning, after a Saturday night of reverie and claiming space and centrality, in the black London that Gates refers to (Gates, 1976).

One generously embodied young man, who would come to me sweating each time from his efforts and tussles with the food, made a running joke of how he never saw me during the sermon, but I was sure to be found in line waiting for the food! Admittedly, some days found me arriving late, not for the food, but for nursing the morning miseries of previous night peregrinations. I did not want to point to him the glaring evidence that if anyone was eating on behalf of the Zimbabwean community gathered each month, it was certainly not me.

What is clear, as has been revealed by many other studies on religion and the African diaspora such as Fumanti is that the church space (Fumanti, 2010), in this instance the music, the food and other relational aspects are entangled in recreating a sense of home and belonging, of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, in addition to trying to maintain a moral economy, supposedly against the onslaught of etic values, which simultaneously exist as the inside of being in Britain.

## Our Lady of Good Counsel

From the days I lived at Paul Robeson House in 2013, many a Saturday would find me nursing a hangover from the reasonably priced beer at Sanganai, cursing existence and having to wash half asleep so I could run and catch the 73 or the 243 from Penton Rise towards Stoke Newington. In such moments, most things around the bus, that is, the people, would be blurry, and I would just have my stop Bouverie Road, in mind. On one occasion, having travelled for about twenty minutes, I felt sickly, and decided to return home for a bit, and then I went back, knowing that even if I found the sermon finished, there would be the food!

Built in 1936, the church sits on Bouverie Road, amidst a residential area. It is a few meters from a street filled with off licences, boutiques, and a pub where I would go

sometimes with some of the young men from the church to watch a football match, or have a few drinks and complain about how long the priest went on, or how cold the inside of the church was. Why is there no heating? Do they want to send us to heaven too soon?

The location of the church means that as people troupe in, in blue, red, beige and other kinds of uniformed paraphernalia, they are a stark image, a blackness in colour. that sometimes confounds, as can be seen in the eyes of some passers-by, or the polite smile of acknowledgement which stops at not fulfilling the curiosity of asking, what is going on here?

Lined with cars parked by the congregants, the street, every first Saturday of the month is transformed, physically, as well as aesthetically. An alternate reality, which is not solely the regular Stoke Newington, or Zimbabwe, comes into existence. As people stand outside catching up before and after the sermons, speaking in Ndebele, or Shona and English, I cannot imagine what sounds, clicks of the tongue, what bodies walk the pavements of this street, or sit around the flower pots, outside these Saturdays. Do these tongues and bodies speak of places, sing of home, as loss and yearning, too? Do they peep through their curtains sometimes, and click in wonder at the black Bouverie Road of a Saturday afternoon? I did, and still do, open the curtains of my eyes and peep, looking around and wondering at this enactment of being Zimbabwean, that is repeated every other month, and that becomes an occupation of a street, of a church, in ways that transform the visuality and architecture of its 'everyday', and which bodies inhabit it. Little versions of being Zimbabwe move in and out of the building, and in a real sense disrupt the usual modes of functioning of the parish. As it says on the church website *Zimbabwean Mass First Saturday only 2pm,* one imagines that on this street, those who tread the pavements regularly also have an understanding of how this space becomes transformed. Although I have not yet witnessed, or had any interactions with residents of the street and neighbourhood, the physical presence, the embodiment of the black, is in constant conversation with the unspoken moral economies of the space itself.

It recalls an incident where an older white woman came in, supposedly to pray, and found the Zimbabwean sermon underway. She sat at the back and attracted a lot of

attention from the all black congregation. There was what I surmised to be a look of seeming miscomprehension on her face, as the sermon is conducted in Shona and Ndebele alternately. After a short while, she stood up and left. She must not have known about 'Zimbabwean Mass First Saturday only 2pm' per the church website. There were other instances of people walking in (white) and possibly realising that they had made a mistake, making a hasty retreat. This provided fodder for many jokes about the Zimbabwean mass and the black church, of mosques, and synagogues, people walking into them and some such.

The Zimbabwean mass reconfigures the street, the physical place and space of the church, and creates a sense of continuity in place, a temporal stability that does not belie the kinds of precarity that accompany existing as, and the embodiment of what is primarily perceived as, and consequently experienced as, migrant and diasporic existence. That unbounded nature of place and the relationality of spatial formations to other places and spaces is brought into being here. Zimbabwean Catholics can claim use of the physical place of the church and the convivial space they create within it, yet also re-imagine and constantly engage with home, in song, music and food, and becoming a part of the transnational circulation of Zimbabwean religious music.

As with Sanganai Bar, albeit with a different moral economy, one recognises the shift in the affect, language, registers of address, the way bodies move, towards, away from and against each other. The opportunity to 'feel at home' may be provided by this space. Yet the constant questioning of the commitment of the young, a present discussion in many sermons, and the understanding of being Zimbabwean, the talk about *kurasa unhu*, losing the essence and moral bearings of being Zimbabwe remain, among other issues, nodes of tension.

## Songs of Salvation? Religion and its Discontents

As already shown, and discussed elsewhere, the processes and relationships that accompany the vehicle through which I have sought to explore and understand being amongst Zimbabweans and music are as crucial as the music itself, in content and performance. The experience of Zimbabwean mass, and the entanglements thereof, further the case for acknowledging musicking. One of the people who offered me insights into their experiences is the young Zimbabwean woman, Catherine.

After repeated attempts to recruit me into the church choir, one of the friends I made there eventually relented in her efforts. There had been, and continue to be concerns that few people, especially young men, join the choir, or come to choir practice, leading to them coming to mass and not participating in the music because they do not know the songs. The songs are in Ndebele and Shona, and new ones are predominantly composed and sent from Zimbabwe, and learned here. A music course and retreat is held each year, and a choir competition also takes place, as part of celebrating Zimbabwean Catholicism and maintaining the diasporic and transnational circulations of religious culture.

The story is often told of how, after branding African traditional religion and its practise as pagan, colonial missionaries also sought to brand the instruments as such. Unfortunately, after attending mass, many would go back to their villages and play the *ngoma,* the drum. *Ngoma* remained part of the cosmology, so the church decided to incorporate it into the music. Mhoze Chikowero argues that the mission church, especially the Catholic Church, enriched itself through African songs and drumbeats, including the familiar rhythm, the colloquial '*fata murungu'*, which proclaimed the paradox of the white father of black congregants (Mhoze Chikowero, 2015). Religion exhibited the alliance of the colonial church and state to re-engineer, control and discipline African being. This has, in the context of diaspora, become a form of self-fashioning and resistance to the threat of the loss of morality, or being swallowed by a new moral economy. During Zimbabwean mass, songs are thus accompanied by *ngoma*, and there is a recognisable rhythm and style (Chitando, 2002; Makahamadze & Sibanda, 2008; Pasura, 2012).

Although religion forms a present and salient undercurrent throughout this section, my purpose is to offer a glimpse into the contestations that accompany understandings of being religious and Zimbabwean, especially in the kinds of music(s) people engage with. I tell this story here through Catherine. Having been active in the church from a young age, attending Catholic school in Zimbabwe before she left for the UK, she has remained a prominent member of the change, taking leadership positions in the congregation, and telling me that religion remains an anchor in her life.

Of the many conversations, we had, I remember one where I prodded her about why, if religion was at all useful, it had not saved Zimbabwe from its political and economic demise. I had been invited to start attending sessions called Soul Food at a church near Tottenham Court Road, at which my scepticism might be reduced, or even conquered by the fervent truths of the gospel! I decided that it would be good for us to meet earlier and have a chat before we proceeded to the church. I arrived early, and ended up having an expensive salad at this restaurant that I had expected to have reasonable prices based on both exterior, and interior. Yet another lesson in judging and covers and so on. Catherine was late, and struggled to find the place. By the time she did, I playfully berated her for getting lost in her city. She has been in London, and the UK, for over a decade. She protested how London remains an elusive city, and on that we agreed. It is elusive not only in the geography and architecture, but also in the ways emplacement and belonging can remain slippery. This elusiveness does not, however, sit as a stable characterisation that can be pinned down in any linear way, because it is what is also attractive to many, that ability to seep in and out of the layers of anonymity that the space may sometimes permit (whilst at the same time recognising the paradoxes of surveillance and over-bureaucratisation).

As I challenge Catherine, she starts to tell me about her journey, leaving Zimbabwe at the height of the socio-economic and political crisis and tensions, with religion and music and her experiences as a young Zimbabwean woman in the UK. In the generational and generative terms of this conversation, and the periodisation, which might be regarded as epochal, of Zimbabwean mobilities, Catherine belongs to the post-2000 movement from Zimbabwe. The kinds of hierarchical perceptions, and the *mafikizolo* colloquialisms have been as much applied to me, as to a generation of Zimbabweans that are regarded by some as espousing different kinds of politics, and eschewing the liberatory 'theology' that was the currency in the previous times. I would argue that Catherine and those regarded as her ilk are not less political, as is evidenced by the stories she shared with me, her feelings on Zimbabwe and Britain, and being a young Zimbabwean woman, interested not just in consuming music, but in also producing it.

I hope to foreground here what, following McKittrick is the thrust to reconceptualise and reinvent location, corporeality, subjectivities, and dominant historical narratives, in situating blackness and black femininity within a displaced, or 'elsewhere' framework (McKittrick, 2000). This of course, within the confines of the generality and breadth of this bounded discussion, and particularly in the context of imagining being Zimbabwean in Britain. As McKittrick further proposes, I also want to explore the situatedness of this young Zimbabwean woman with the effort at understanding and acknowledging that young black Zimbabwean women's bodies are speaking bodies that embrace a contradictory positionality and use this ambiguous place to think about and contend with the multiple locations of black women. Black Zimbabwean women's subjectivities and bodies are processes, acts and enactments that are contested and conjunctural rather than just oppositional and static.

## The Genesis

In the beginning was the word, or was it? What Catherine called the genesis was at least the beginnings of her diasporic journey and experiences, referencing it metaphorically to the beginning in the bible. At least we are aware that the beginnings of individual journeys are already inserted into the beginnings before them, of journeys already made, imaginings already in existence. The logocentrism inherent in certain writings or narrations of beginnings only takes precedence in the manner of capturing and claims made of certain moments, in certain modes.

Having left Zimbabwe around 2005, Catherine had been in the UK for close to a decade, and mentioned that her family had left Zimbabwe because of the economic and political situation, and her parents desired for them to have a better education, and broader experiences. Leaving Zimbabwe had been harder than she had imagined it, having just started high school. The experience of Woodford, Essex, became a sort of awakening, an awareness of herself not just as an African migrant, but as a young black woman, who had to justify and legitimise her presence in the UK.

She jokingly mentioned how she had been asked at some point in high school if she was a princess, because typical Africans could not afford to live and educate their children in Woodford. I laughed with her, yet also recognising the discomfort and

precarity that accompanies inhabiting a body that one feels is marked. This generation of Zimbabweans enters Britain when 'No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs', is no longer the mantra. To not have the explicit significations, in language and other forms, as was experienced by Mudhara Wala and that earlier generation of Zimbabweans, of alienation and lived marginality, is, however, not to have alienation and marginality as material.

Catherine went on to tell me about how in her early days in the UK, they would use an online service, Limewire, where they would search for and listen to music from Zimbabwe and other African countries. For this generation, new forms of technology and media have been instrumental in shaping musical transnationality and diasporic sensibilities, driving the shifts and fluidity of musicking. As Catherine said:

> So I remember back in the day way before Facebook, Myspace, Reverb nation and so on…the only way we could access Zim music was through buying the actual CDs ku Zimbabwe. [In] the good old days my Zim list [friends] would have brought me latest urban grooves lol. Then there was YouTube, people began to upload Zim music videos, on Zimvibes and so on, then we could finally watch all those music videos from back home … Vangodza [business brand] emerged, they used to sell music from Zim they would upload the latest albums so that was an avenue for Zim music…waaay before access to ana iTunes. We also had zimmusic.com only downside was that these guys were fucken expensive. Those days only Tuku [Oliver Mtukudzi] and Mapfumo would tour, maybe others did underground but the main ones were Tuku and Mapfumo, folk that went there were often seen as zvidhakwa [drunks] and so on, but now that has changed.
>
> Then we had good old Zimfest to look forward to because they brought in a different line up, also because Zimfest was done masikati [in the afternoon]. In 2008, after every Shona mass we would sing Ishe komborerai Africa/Ngosi Sikelela Africa [22] [God Bless Africa] then Ishe Komborerai Zimbabwe…It was always sad…the priest would always start by telling us how things in Zim were getting worse and so on and how we needed to pray … It was deeply spiritual as

[22] This used to be the national anthem of Zimbabwe until it was changed to 'Simudzai Mureza/Phakamisani Iflegi'. A pan-African prayer for Africa to get exalted, Nkosi Sikelela remains the South African national anthem

> well! Also – Kuzimbabwe vasikana [girls] don't serve during mass, because it's all down to the bishop … Ku England vasikana serve in mass

The experience of the elsewhere for Catherine, as it had been for many who have felt displaced or dislocated, and transitioning and adapting to new places and spaces, manifested that sense of concurrent loss and gain that Ugresic narrates (Ugresic, 2009). She was clear in her relationship to music through her teenage years.

> Music has been very therapeutic…when I was 19 I remember going through an identity crisis. Tuku and Mapfumo music pulled me through … I have learnt so much about my culture, language…just from listening to the music. Good thing my cousin is an addict as well we always had the conversations on what is njuga…and all them random Shona words Tuku uses. Ziwere zvinorevei? [What does Ziwere mean?] I remember the first time I listened to the song Waerera by the Bhundu Boys, it just made no sense, so I asked Chris [a friend], he had no clue he is more into the beat lol anyways he the said nguva ye hondo [during the war] hutakataka meant tactic…then bingo! We got the meaning behind the song it's obviously a hondo [war] song. Chiwoniso[23] does the same as well from Ancient voices, to 'Vanorapa' to 'Matsotsi.'
>
> Hameno kuti imbanje here [I don't know if it was marijuana) although I don't smoke. I was listening to 'Kumanginde' by Thomas Mapfumo on my way home from work. I started crying on the train and why was I crying? It just dawned on me kuti Zim will never be the same the same Zim I grew up in, it has completely changed, my kids will just hear dzave nyaya [stories]. When we came over I always had the mind-set yekuti ndichadzokera [that I would return]. I still dream of my old room, my childhood. I don't belong in England it, ain't my 'home', so I told my aunt last week and she warned me about the 90 per cent unemployment rate in Zimbabwe, I am stuck!

Here Catherine is sharing with me the experience and feelings of dislocation that emanate from being in Britain, and from struggling to engage with the music from 'home' because she has been in Britain for a while, and having left Zimbabwe young,

[23] Zimbabwean singer and exponent of mbira music who died in 2013

cannot remember the meanings of some of the words. The contradictions of the feelings of loss that accompany the diasporic experience for her, and turning to songs that remind her of a place in time, that she does not fully understand, are revealing. Deciphering the meanings of songs in Shona, in addition to deciphering one's self, during what Catherine calls an 'identity crisis' that she experienced in her late teenage years, become intertwined projects.

These feelings and this sense of dislocation, even in a Britain that claims to be 'multicultural', emanate from the faux 'tolerance' and 'acceptance'. In other words, as Gilroy puts it in his exploration of what he terms the negative dialectics of conviviality related to the experiences of race politics and immigration in Britain:

> We can be misled by the fact that a few black and Asian Britons may benefit from the love of exotica that has arisen in response to the rigors of living with difference, of being with the Other. This confusion is compounded when we discover that exciting, unfamiliar cultures can be consumed in the absence of any face-to-face recognition or real-time negotiation with their actual creators. The intensified desire for what was formerly stigmatized and forbidden can also be interpreted as a part of the collapse of English cultural confidence that has fed the development of anxious and insecure local and national identities (Gilroy, 2004:137).

There is in Catherine's expression a clear disavowal of being-at-home in the elsewhere, a being affected that sees her cry on the train as she listens to a song that takes her back in time. Although this elsewhere in many ways became a place of 'sanctuary' in the moment of decline in Zimbabwe, feelings of belonging and emplacement are yet to take hold, if ever. This music by Thomas Mapfumo that makes her cry invokes place and space, her childhood, memories of a Zimbabwe that will not be returned to. An enmeshing of past, present and future is also brought into being as she imagines how for her children, who are yet to exist, Zimbabwe will only exist in stories. Already, an imagined diaspora of the future is brought into existence, a diaspora which will continue to be so through the stories of a place that used to be. Emotion and memory combine to produce the sentiment that, "England, it ain't my home". At the same time, there is an awareness that Zimbabwe remains inhabitable

as home, what with the 90 per cent unemployment, and the quashing of a young woman's dreams that awaits.

'Waerera Pahutakataka Hwegorira', a song by Bhundu Boys, got special mention for its effect, the impression it has on her. As she gushed over the song, she suggested that, "not only that … is the intro a harp then the bass being played Zimba style [black] this is not by accident. Already Bhundu boys want you to imagine mabhunu nemagorira vachirwa musango [the whites and the guerrillas fighting in the bush], that is genius! Then obviously, the Comrades dance of victory, now that's art. The jit[24] is."

The Bhundu Boys made a name for themselves at the height of Fred Zindi and Wala's musical experiences in Britain, on the 'world music' circuit, disintegrating later after the death of bandleader Biggie Tembo and some alleged disputes with their management in the UK (Brusila, 2001). They toured Britain, and are famous for having opened for Madonna at Wembley stadium in 1987 (Brusila, 2003). One would imagine they remain a well-known name amongst younger Zimbabweans, but the generational differences and shifts in musical currents means young Zimbabweans in the diaspora know more about urban grooves and Zim-dancehall than about bands like the Bhundu Boys. I continue to spend some time with former band member Kuda Matimba, who did give me a place to crash when I found myself of no aboard for a short while, who now performs with the band Harare, and have also met, several times, the former drummer Kenny Chitsvatsva. In my interaction with Kuda and our discussions about music and Zimbabweans in the UK, I recognised that the history and complex story of the Bhundu boys is both exciting and sad in the rise, and eventual absence of Zimbabwean music as prominent in the UK. It is a story that also coincides with the decline of Zimbabwe's fortunes, and is deserving of full attention in its own space.

When Catherine speaks to me, or writes me, there is a clear colloquial approach and informality that depicts my relationship with her. It is a colloquialism of the 'lols' of current speak, grammars of social media and expression, which in some ways, I am

[24] Jit is what the Bhundu boys called their music, and relates to a drumming and dance style popular in Zimbabwe, see for example(Brusila, 2001) (Kaemmer, 1989)

both in and out of. Whereby engaging with Wala and the older generation of Zimbabweans is fraught with the kinds of hierarchy and forms of respect I participate in, they partly dissolve with younger Zimbabweans. I say partly because power relations are always pervasive, and my position as doing research on Zimbabwe, or the positions of many as having come to Britain before me, among many other things, are open to hierarchisation.

At some level, even though she is younger, we also share similar frustrations and concerns around being strangers in this elsewhere, and in Fanonian terms, the fact of blackness in Britain (Fanon, 1967, 2015). There are common, though gendered, experiences in how we relate to inhabiting these zones of non-being I lived in Zimbabwe during the height of the socio-political and economic problems that led to Catherine leaving for the UK, yet she has an appreciation of these complexities that is closer, dissimilar to ways that Wala's generation, who came to Britain in the '70s and '80s, consider them.

That is, the mythic constructions of home and belonging are indeed shaped by the diasporic journeys that have been taken, when and how people left Zimbabwe, under what circumstances, and their encounters of Britain. I find my relationship to the idea of Zimbabwe, albeit more cynical and pessimistic, finds resonances in another young person's experiences of Zimbabwe and Britain. Even in moments of remembering, although our childhoods were unalike and spent in different parts of Zimbabwe, there are shared memories of a better Zimbabwe, and of crisis and decline, that would have mostly existed as news, and as narratives told by others, to a generation that came to Britain earlier. In setting the historical foundations that see the Bhundu Boys performing in Britain, the generation of Fred Zindi and Wala, and their children who were born in Britain, are further and further from the bounded constructions of Zimbabwe as place, but continue to engage in the transnational and diasporic spaces in which being Zimbabwean is negotiated.

The song that arrests Catherine, 'Waerera Pahutakataka Hwegorira' exemplifies the place of music in the Zimbabwean second *Chimurenga*, the war of and struggle for liberation from colonial rule, as discussed by Pfukwa and Gonye, for instance, who recognise how guerrillas used music to sell their agendas and garner support (Gonye,

2013; Moore, 1991) (Pfukwa, 2008). In invoking this song, and finding meaning in its sounds and rhythms, and searching for the meanings of the words, Catherine partakes in the making of historical traces and circulation of an anti-colonial historical moment and the decolonisation that follows, captured in song, and transported in space and time, and consumed in a Britain that has long pushed the Bhundu Boys to the annals of history, and where the idea of struggle and independence for Zimbabweans has taken new meaning as they confront the abjection and social death of the elsewhere. The connections between Britain and Zimbabwe are not only manifest in her presence in the UK, but in both the song, and the story of the band that made the song. In the experience of a young Zimbabwean woman in the UK finding expression, meaning and solace in the music of Bhundu Boys, we find a strong instance of the historical and transnational connections transcending space and time, and of the complicated ways in which past and present interplay in the negotiation of being and legibility in the diaspora.

Part of her musical journey, prompted by being in Britain, has been making a concerted effort to engage more with Zimbabwean music in Shona, which is her first language. Finding herself in a Britain where English does not differentiate her, and the idea of the 'modern' ceasing to be as appealing as a way of trying to reclaim an imagined Zimbabwean being, turning to listening to and writing songs in a Shona is an act of negotiation and navigating linguistic and musical spaces.

She used to write songs in English. "I would show you the scrap books", she laughs,

> but hmm you will take the piss so I shan't lol. Anyways I remember one day I decided I was going to write in Shona. I wanted to sing to God in my own mother tongue, I wanted it to be personal. It was not easy for me hence why my lyrics are simple, I just don't have the ability to write in amazing Shona but then that's how I speak, that's me. I write worship/gospel music because I only sing to connect with God, I have no interest in love songs, lol, maybe that may change who knows. Also I sing as a hobby, although music is my passion something I can't live without. It's my hobby. I have received criticism for this, some say I don't take it seriously hence why my music is mediocre, lo. l I should put more effort. The style is akin to Pentecostal music as opposed to typical

> fata murungu[25]… I have only ever written one fata murungu [the father is white/priest is white] song at Monte Casino and that took a lot of effort with the different parts. Makes me think who my audience are lol if they are just Zim Pentecostal or can Zim roma [Catholic] be as well… I have to say Zim roma has been supportive at one point we printed 300 copies they were sold for charity KuChishawasha and they sold out! That awkward moment when you get a lift and they are playing your CD in their car so cringe-worthy!

Catherine moves between expressing her love for religion and gospel music, and also questioning her position in this regard. These personal, internal contradictions and tensions, which continue during our conversations, are reflective of larger collective tensions and contradictions that riddle the ideas and experiences of being Zimbabwean diaspora.

I, for instance, had the misfortune of meeting at the Notting Hill Carnival one Zimbabwean man who tried to take me to task on why, he had assumed, I did not know what his Shona surname meant. Having been introduced to me in English, and seeing me cooking with Wala's family at their stall, he might have assumed many things, including that my understanding of Shona was limited as might be that of those who were born to Wala's generation of the '70s. I kindly informed him, in Shona, that I had some idea of what his name might mean, but was not obliged to tell him anything. As he went on, I also told him there were many things I knew that he probably didn't, because no one, after all, is a fountain of knowledge. I recognised his discomfort, reminiscent of the situations where I had been called a *mafikizolo*, the emphasis on hierarchies of knowing place and space, and in this instance belonging and identity through language.

This is to say that I recognised some of my experiences in Catherine's narratives, although of course I wanted to believe I had a better mastery of Shona than she had, and had not been in London for as long as she had, being a *mafikizolo* and all as I was!

[25] The African drums played in the church are said, in their rhythm, to be speaking "fata murungu", see (Mhoze Chikowero, 2015)

We decided, in our conversations, to also explore more her relationship to religion and music as it manifested in Britain, and how it shaped her experiences as a young Zimbabwean woman. We sat down for a sustained conversation at a restaurant off Tottenham Court Road, close to the church that I had been invited to. It was a rainy February day, and I was not going to wait outside in the rain for her, since she had been struggling to find the place. She went on to give me a brief rundown of her relationship to gospel music

Although Catholic, she had been on a journey of discovery, trying to find a space that was a "fit" for her.

> I have been to most if not all Zim churches in London, 'Pentecostal'. Most of the music is [it seems] South African, either in Sotho or Zulu maybe because us Zimbas [Zimbabweans] love copying, particularly Joyous Celebration. But this is the sad thing, in 2006 Israel Houghton [a gospel musician from the USA] went to Zim and toured then he had learnt of Alpha and Omega by Erasmus Mutambira, that's how Zim got on the map in terms of gospel music, it took someone to come all the way from America and record it.

There was a tinge of national feeling, a 'musical patriotism' in Catherine's words, a sense that, as she expressed later, that music from Zimbabwe, be it gospel or otherwise, was underappreciated. This was a frustration that seemed to shape her experiences of music as a listener as well as a performer, straddling the apparent divide between the 'religious' and the 'worldly'. She went on to point out how she had always wondered why,

> Zim churches would sing Sotho, Zulu songs, maybe around those days no one wanted to be associated with Zimbabwe. It was too uncool. I remember coming across some Zimbas with Zimba names and so on, asked them where they were from and they said South Africa, like what the fuck! I don't blame though maybe, they got sick of being asked about the political situation back home and stuff. After a while you do get tired of explaining Zim politics and being put in the same bracket of the starving kid they watch on telly.

We laughed. I remembered an incident when I had attended a poetry session hosted by a young Zimbabwean woman who had become a friend. I had a conversation that

left me unsure of whether I had tried to impose a national identity on someone who I thought was trying to evade being called Zimbabwean. I shared this with Catherine, who went on to give instances of when she herself had not spoken up in moments where it seemed claiming to be Zimbabwean would lead to ridicule, especially at the height of sensationalised politics in Zimbabwe.

The contingent and punctuated aspects of negotiating and performing identity are brought to the fore here, as the desire to reclaim an idea of Zimbabwe confronts the contentions of a politics that has made Zimbabwe an international spectacle.

In the midst of the kinds of transitions that come with being in the elsewhere and being encountered as the strange, the anchoring of religion and gospel music becomes a sort of transcendence, a way of categorising and stabilising one's understanding of the world, and re-emphasising the moral economy. Similar to what Mattia Fumanti perceives in his study of the Ghanaian Methodist Church in London (Fumanti, 2010), church for Catherine and other Zimbabweans becomes a space for the construction of a unique 'diasporic' citizenship, irrespective of the formalities of status. This is because the church constitutes for migrants a transnational polity, one that connects Britain and Zimbabwe, a naturalised, taken-for-granted continuum arising from the long history of Catholicism in Zimbabwe.

These Zimbabweans then also engage in Fumanti's (ibid) idea of 'virtous' citizenship, an ideal built on the understanding that citizenship, the right to national belonging, is achieved by being law abiding, hardworking, and actively involved in Methodist fellowships through acts of caring, charity, nurture, and human fellowship. I participated in some of this 'citizenship' by visiting families of the bereaved, and one time, a lady who had just been released from the hospital, who chronicled her experiences of racism and maltreatment in the health system to me. In participating in the variant forms of virtuous citizenship, members of the church regard themselves as maintaining values that are perceived as universal, at the same time emphasising the need to hold onto Zimbabwean ways of being, steeped in the inventions of tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012; Ranger, 1997). It matters to be virtuous in Britain, as it does for Zimbabwe, seen in the prayers for Zimbabwe, in the efforts at

inclusivity in the church, and the constant reminders to not forget 'where we have come from'.

During one sermon, the priest raised a newspaper in which there was an article about a young Zimbabwean who had been stabbed somewhere in London. He went on to chronicle different cases of crime that Zimbabweans were involved in that had made the news. "Is this what we came here for?" he asked. "Is this what your families back home expect of you? They think you are working hard so you can send money back home." Addressing parents and the youth in turn, the priest emphasised that Zimbabweans were a people with values, who treat each other with compassion, and though we might find ourselves away from home, we should not lose our values, or let Britain corrupt us.

In the priest's words was a plea to the congregants to continue seeing religion as an anchor in a Britain, an elsewhere, which is described in Oliver Mtukudzi's song 'Nhava' as *marimuka* the deep and dark forests where many do not return at all, or return with nothing. The contradictions of Britain being a sanctuary for Zimbabweans, yet also being *marimuka* is apparent in the priests exhortations, and the reiteration of a moral economy, a set of assumptions, ideas and emotions that should shape Zimbabwean experiences in Britain is evident (Fumanti & Werbner, 2010). These exhortations, that were present in every other sermon in one form or the other, was also the call to resist abjection, to not be tempted into a British moral economy in which abjection, and not just social, but physical, death would be the likely end, especially for young Zimbabweans. As Pasura has argued, for Zimbabwean Christians, Britain is a country that provides settlement, but they want to remain different from it, insulating themselves from its secular norms and values (Pasura, 2014). Contradictions, however, ensue when, as at one time, a priest admitted to having made one of the female congregants pregnant. The idea of the congregation as a source of moral fortitude was temporarily shattered, because one of the people who was regarded as the custodian of these very values had gone against them. In conversations with older members of the congregation, it was feared that such occurrences would only serve to push the youths towards the Pentecostal churches. Many of the young, like Catherine, already contested the place of women in the church. The elsewhere is a place of fallibility in ways that may be similar to home, but when a

priest was involved in such a case in the diaspora, there tended to be explanations that leaned towards blaming the corrupting values of Britain and its weak moral economy.

Catherine's relationship to religion and music as a young Zimbabwean woman was also coloured by her understanding of what she called the "spirituality" of the music. Accompanying the kinds of moral economies that shape the experiences of being Zimbabwean and Catholic in Britain (Fumanti & Werbner, 2010; Pasura, 2012) as already highlighted, is how music and lifestyle are connected. The idea of a night out with friends, going to clubs, especially as a young woman, was abhorrent. It was something that Catherine was just beginning to take on as, in her opinion, she came into herself as an adult, and a feminist. She however still held onto these values that inform this moral economy.

In Catherine's words,

> ask any gospel fanatic they will tell you that listening to 'worldly' music is a sin, because the music has a spirit [mweya] behind it. Particularly in the Pentecostal scene. I have been to some weddings and its strictly gospel or instrumental music no Tuku music.

To buttress her point, she added,

> everyone was watching 'The Truth about Hip-hop' a pastor from the States (U.S.A) talking about how even holy hip-hop was demonic. However, if you go to Zim churches they play gospel rhumba, museve [sungura], the difference is the lyrics, the dances are the same. It is just probably a way of enjoying music and not sinning.

In chronicling these moments, there was the sense of incredulity on her part at how this now seemed strange as she told it to me. I am passionate about different kinds of music, about pushing a complex conversation on Zimbabwe, and no doubt this passion would have come through, and got recognised by Catherine. I realised over time that the emphasis on invitations to church and singing in the church choir shifted to alerting me of Zimbabwean musical events taking place around London. Our conversations also became intermingled with those on Zimbabwean literature and inevitably politics, on Catherine's dreams of returning to do some work in Zimbabwe

because she felt she needed to make a positive contribution. Couldn't she make that through music? It was difficult, she responded, because making music is expensive.

Two of the events that she invited me to in 2014 were to see a band fronted by a young Zimbabwean man, Farai and the Forest Dawn, at a Shoreditch bar and Africa on the Square, an annual event on Trafalgar Square, London that celebrates various aspects of African culture and the African diaspora in Britain. Both events were non-religious, which was a relief for me. My relationship to gospel music, like the one to religion, was fraught with past and present tensions. I always preferred, if I could help it, to not be assaulted by the predilections to trying to convince me that a supernatural solution to Zimbabwe's problem could be found. Part of the expectations being in the "field", however, entails suspending judgement. For something that I was, as I mention, simultaneously on the inside, and outside, pretending that I suspended judgement would be a travesty to my version of the experiences of my being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, through which I filter my time in London, no doubt, despite attempts and encouragements to transcend this.

Why was Catherine moving to now inviting me to these non-religious, non-gospel events? After all, I had met her through church, and her initial invitations had been around church activity. I joked with her about how her parents would blame me for converting her to my anthropological pursuits and turning her away from being a good, moral Zimbabwean girl! She assured me that I should not overestimate my influence in the short time that I had known her.

"I used to be like that" not anymore, she said, "hence why I listen to Christian rock, gospel hip-hop, gospel jazz and so on." What changed?

> I was limiting myself. So, I listen to 'everything'. I have always enjoyed Chiwoniso's music but I remember being told uchasvikirwa [you will be possessed] it's demonic music, mashavi [spirits] mbira and so on. When I got invited to perform at the Zimarts festival day where Mbuya Stella Chiweshe was featuring my dad was excited, my mum not so much. Not only her, I remember some band members had to withdraw because it was svikiro [spirit medium] music. Turnout was mostly white, the few blacks present were mostly in dreadlocks! I always wonder why with certain scenes everyone

> either has afro jewellery, locks, natural hair. I think I do it because I am proud of being African, but who am I trying to prove it to? Fuck knows! In April 2014, we went to Salif's [Salif Keita] concert, opening the stage was Seckou Keita playing the Kora—that music is 'spiritual'. My parents seemed to enjoy it than they would if it were mbira, maybe because it's from a different culture, but yeah, so maybe music is spiritual after all. Hence why those who listen to rock become suicidal lol.

I had been invited to the Salif Keita show that was at the Barbican. I found the ticket prices forbidding, and the embedded aspects of the Zimbabwean moral economy kicked in, as I struggled imagining how I would explain to these two Zimbabwean religious parents that I was spending time with them and their family in order to understand the relationship of Zimbabweans in Britain to music and identity. It always sounds more exciting on paper.

What was also present in the description of how her parents might be more amenable to the Kora and Salif Keita's music, but not with the mbira, are the contradictions that come with the invented traditions and collective identifications that come with history and nationality/nationalisms (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012; T. Ranger, 1997). For many Zimbabweans, as Catherine reveals, and as the case of the story of the drum in the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe exemplifies, there are continuing contradictions in the understanding and experience of tradition as a binary to Christianity and modernity (Mhoze Chikowero, 2015). Here the idea of being modern emanates from that enduring coloniality that equates the traditional or indigenous with the obsolete, and religion, in the form of Christianity, buttresses this position. The complexities are then compounded in this diasporic space, in which belonging as a national affectation meets elements of the African diaspora, and presents these contradictions where the Kora is somehow less of a spiritually threatening object because in the moment of its consumption, the colonial genealogies that shape the understanding of Zimbabwean instruments like the mbira are not foregrounded when it comes to the Kora. Granted, someone from Mali or Senegal, with a different experience and understanding of the instrument, might give a different analysis.

I am also interested in these moments that Catherine shares as they pertain to informing how young Zimbabwean women occupy space and place in the elsewhere. I already mention the gendered dynamics that ensue in a place like Sanganai, where the idea of 'good women' endures, as understood in relationship to the spaces and places they occupy especially at night. A recurrent phrase in Shona, *mabasa erima,* loosely, dark deeds, or what is done in the dark of night, combines the night and unsavoury characteristics, more so when it comes to definitions of womanhood and religiosity. Clifford, just as Brah, looking at the different discourses of diaspora, recognises that diasporic experiences are always gendered (Brah, 2005; Clifford, 1994). There has been in some instances a tendency for Zimbabwean and other accounts of diaspora and diaspora cultures to not recognise this fact, to talk of travel and displacement in unmarked ways, thus normalising male experiences (Kleist, 2010; Pasura, 2008; Tinarwo & Pasura, 2014) .

The construction of morality hinged on imaginings of Zimbabwean religiosity and moral economies does not however go uncontested. The frustrations Catherine shares, and her later indictment of how women are portrayed in Zimbabwean music is testament to that. Her self-professed feminism also means an awareness of the gender dynamics that are consequent to this moral economy, and her attempts at forging a being in the elsewhere that at some moments swings, like a pendulum, from one side to the other, and also meanders and zig zags, contingent and punctuated.

As we sat in the café at Rich Mix in Shoreditch waiting for a performance, she shared with me some of her views on women in Zimbabwean music. I ruffled through the menu, not sure what to order amongst the Indian dishes that were on offer. I was certain that I did not want to befall the fate of many who underestimated the consequences of spicy food. After some back and forth, we both settled for a salad. Jokes about weight and such and the tyranny of beauty standards followed. Was I worried about my weight? Was I watching my ass? It mattered in this place!

> I remember 2009 I went on Myspace on Chiwoniso's page and she had uploaded 'Rebel Woman' the album! The feeling of listening to that song is indescribable because yes for once there was a song about a brave woman, a rebel who defied the societal stereotype. Probably why I have three versions of the song. I understand most of Zim music is written and produced by men!

> Written in the cultural context which is male dominated, but it does piss me off. Hence why I like the Fungisai song as well. 'Rebel Woman' got me questioning and I still do about women in the liberation struggle ana Teurai Ropa[26].

She continued,

> I am just sick and tired of how women in Zim music are portrayed. Gospel music is mostly on submission and kuvaka musha [building a home]. Bhundu boys 'Tenga Bhiza Utare' or the song 'Pombi', pombi inopomba kwese, kovakadzi havaite chipfeve here?

Her reading of the song pombi was that it suggested men could be promiscuous, but what about women?

> Fair to say Mateo changed this on 'Waenda', it's the woman akazadza munhu AIDS [who transmit HIV], interesting. Tukuwo pamwana wamambo hanzi tizvityore [Tuku says on the song] 'Mwana Wamambo' we should humble ourselves … take as much shit from your in-laws, ko aidi kunyorera vakomana kuti vaite vakwasha kwavo [why did he not write to young men telling them to be good sons-in-law]? Makes me question why Tuku would tour na Sam chete … Selmor was only a backing vocalist pama tour ake but sam was a featured artist…Willom Tight[27] hanzi ndinoda wangu wekumaruzevha [I want a woman from the reserves/village]… a woman who I can control who will just say yes daddy, no daddy. Varume vaye vakaimba 'vasikana vamazuvano havana hutano' [then there are those men who sang about girls nowadays being unhealthy]. Then vakomana 'vaunoda ava Maggie vanoda zvakawanda dai wambomira Maggie' [these boys that you like Maggie, they want too many things, you should stop Maggie]. I swear vakomana ndo vanomuda vachimunyenga [yet the boys are the ones who desire her and court her]. So yeah that's my frustration with Zim music lyrical content, not much on empowering the woman.

[26] Teurai Ropa was the name de guerre of the former vice president of Zimbabwe Joice Mujuru. A critical take on the role of women in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle is offered by Fay Chung in (Chung, 2006)
[27] Zimbabwean musician

The frustration was palpable as Catherine expressed disappointed in the didactic tones of some songs, the messages they emphasise, especially on the submissiveness of women. She also goes on to question why Oliver Mtukudzi only went on tour with his now late son Sam, and not the other daughters who are also now musicians. This music, in her opinion, although it is not necessarily all gospel, is part of a larger moral economy that polices women's bodies and imagines women as subservient to men. In an analysis of male-produced urban grooves music in Zimbabwe, Chari has posited that the representations of women in the lyrics is largely disempowering, celebrating negative stereotypes and the commodification of women (Chari, 2008; Makina, 2013). The intersections of tradition, gender and nation are noted by Claire Jones in the case of mbira music in Zimbabwe. For instance, the cases of Beaular Dyoko, who was the first Zimbabwean woman to make a commercial recording of Shona mbira music in 1962, and Stella Chiweshe, show how women were expected to be possessed, in many cases by a male spirit, in order to be able to play mbira. Particularly at the height of colonialism, the mbira became a site of the construction of cultural nationalism, accompanied with the gender scripts that dominate Shona musical traditions. Jones, citing Impey (1992) points out that the women who thus take up mbira defy the circumscribed gender scripts and mores that constrain their musical lives (A. M. Impey, 1992; Jones, 2008). Another example of a Zimbabwean musician who exemplifies this defiance of gender limitation is Dorothy Masuku, a cosmopolitan woman whose life embodies the trans-territorial nature of musicking (Falola & Fleming, 2012). Having moved to then apartheid South Africa as Chikowero, in (Falola & Fleming, 2012) notes, she shrewdly rose by both fighting and co-opting into her service Sophiatown's masochist gangster circles and catapulting herself to the top. Popular figures like her set trends and influenced urban performance idioms that became implicated in a more complex gendered power politics revolving around the illicit *shebeen*, and also as part of African engagement with brutal colonial modernity that criminalised African urbanity and underground survival economies like beer brewing and hawking.

In observing the male-dominated nature of the Zimbabwean music scene, Chitando and Mateveke however argue for the agency of women in music, using one instance that is an inspiration to Catherine, the mbira music of Chiwoniso Maraire and 'Rebel Woman', and gospel singer Olivia Charamba (Chitando & Mateveke, 2012). In their

contention, such women occupy public musical spaces despite the limitations of patriarchy, and through their courage and resilience, transcend the image of women only being dancers or backing singers in male-led bands. These understandings of Zimbabwean music are shared by Catherine, in this elsewhere, as she contends with negotiating being and resisting abjection.

Thus, as this music travels, follows different routes, especially the virtual, and becomes available to Zimbabweans in the elsewhere, it also at the same time becomes perceived as carrying with it various significations that attempt to reify roots. It also emerges as way of constricting the music and creative spaces and places that young Zimbabwean women like Catherine occupy, and spawns different contestations.

In describing what she enjoys about music, especially Zimbabwean music, Catherine emphasised how song lyrics mean a lot for her, even songs in languages she doesn't understand.

> I have always had interesting conversations with people regarding what is the first thing they enjoy when they listen to a song…some say it's the beat before the lyrics. For me it's the complete opposite, hence why I will google out a Salif [Salif Keita] song. Although I listen to most genres, I can't stand rap. Bashmant [dancehall] is my worst enemy, maybe 'cause of its misogynistic character; it's all about objectifying women, hence why in clubs most men just randomly grab on you.

Interested in the production side of music as well, she pointed out how the quality of the music and its uptake was dependent on who produced it, especially those who understood what the 'Zimbabwean sound' was.

> One thing making music in the diaspora has taught me is that yes, the producer matters. People can spot a Mono song or a Macdee[28] song. In Macdee's own words, any song he produces is always a hit kuZim charts. In the diaspora, we have all the resources; anyone can become a musician, mari yako chete [you only need money]. Hence why most diasporan musicians except league yaana Shingi Shoniwa, Eska Mtungwazi, Tinashe, the Zambezi guy, tend to be

[28] Zimbabwean music producers

> mediocre. Making music is expensive, so why not just go to a friend's garage? It is important to note ana ABBRA Tribe yaana Kryiah Dee [Prudence Katomeni's little sister], Jusa Dementor[29]… these guys were different, they started the proper music videos, dzisina green screen neshiri [without the green screen and birds]… also ana Bkay N Kazz, but they are expensive. These guys did try something different. At one point Lebara signed a contract, navo their song was used on an advert. Most musicians now go back home and get their music produced by the legends before they come back, the reception they get is different. I experienced it when Macdee produced the song 'Mutsvene'.

The idea of an 'authentic' Zimbabwean sound comes back to define how she understands the music, and the production process. Although she mentions production in the diaspora being fairly easy and accessible, there seems to be the suggestion that it is also inferior, as she compares it to that of established artists like Shingi Shinhiwa of the Noisettes, who was born to Zimbabwean parents and grew up in Britain. Catherine comes back to the money.

> Mari mari mari [money money money]. Music is expensive, that is probably why Zim musicians in Zim draw more crowds when they come over. I have always wondered why say Tuku travels with his full band, Enock Piroro and so on, even though they could just have ana Peter Mashasha play for him. I think it's because no-one can play the bass like he does. Successful diasporan shows have been through an affiliation with a church, like Free to Worship is ZAOGA. Also, they have a strong band comprising of the guys who used to play ku Nguva Yakwana[30] … there Zex Manatsa's two sons Aaron and the other one also sometimes play. Then there is Heavens Mutambira, mwana we [a child to] the guy akanyora [who wrote] Alpha na [and] Omega … There is also Zimpraise, an imitation of Joyous Celebration from South Africa, who sold out their shows. Of all the Zim shows I have been to, this has to be the one that sold the most tickets. I think it's because these guys give you value for your money, they can sing! Zimpraise and Free to Worship—in both shows there is serious practice and order, something that failed with ZIGMA, Zimbabwe International Gospel Musicians…

[29] Zimbabwean musicians in Britain
[30] A gospel music collective from Zimbabwe

Religion and gospel music are brought back into the conversation, as a genealogy of music is also brought out. Zexie Manatsa, of the generation of Oliver Mtukudzi, was a hit-maker in Zimbabwe with songs such as Makepekepe and Chipo Chiroorwa. In his later life, he became a pastor and now performs gospel music. His sons, based in Britain, perform their own music, and also play for the different touring religious groups Catherine mentions, such as Free to Worship. In addition to the generational possibilities produced by the moments in which Wala and Catherine arrive in Britain, there are also those of the performers of music, who travel with their sounds, and bequeath these to their progeny, as with Zex Manatsa, giving birth to different iterations of diasporic musicking. I hesitantly approached and greeted one of the Manatsa boys, I am not sure which one, at a Mokoomba gig at the Jazz Café in Camden. As very recognisable tall, gangly man from a musical family, the marriage of one of them to Oliver Mtukudzi's daughter also concretises this image of the generational possibilities that become diasporic, as bodies and sounds meander on routes to the elsewhere.

As the last section I commit to exemplifying the fractured nature of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere shows, I am interested in the 'categorical constructions' of unitary imaginings of the migrant. In the case of Zimbabwe, one way of doing so is exploring the absence of 'white Zimbabweans' in the dominant narrative. As a concomitant production of the post-2000 displacement of white farmers in Zimbabwe, and the deleterious and sensational politics that ensued, I am interested in getting Catherine's views on this.

> Varungu unovaonera ku Zimfest chete [Whites, you see them only at Zimfest]! 'Coz kune[(there is] rugby… and they organise it. I remember 2013, there was summer fest with the exact same model as Zimfest this time Tehn Diamond, Junior Brown and Stunner came ku rugby field ku Wanstead … Probably why Zimfest has not run for the past two summers, because unlike back in the day where they brought in other musicians vasiri [who are not] Tuku na Mapfumo … we have seen kuti different musicians are starting to come through our own promoters so havachina [they don't have a] niche … White Zimbas…mostly when you hang with Rhodies it's coz you either went to the same school in Zim… Peterhouse, Watershed … Last time I met up with a white Zimba ku Jazz

> Café when Max Wild was playing. I have seen some ku Carnival. Why should we hang around navo anyways? Most of them don't make an effort to integrate or learn the language so why are we surprised? I remember in Zim ku crèche, the sisi vebasa [maid] would teach us the Shona rhymes because Mrs Ace and Mrs Clatworthy could not be asked to learn those songs and teach us … Shona was taught by a separate teacher kuLendy Park, you were not allowed to speak in Shona or you would go for detention! Although last summer a white nun from Zim came for Shona mass and she was speaking in Shona. I think she was a Dominican sister.

The encounters with white Zimbabweans for Catherine were irregular. Her position, however, differed from mine because she had experiences with white Zimbabweans 'at home' in ways that I didn't, as a young Zimbabwean, growing up, and this shaped some of her comments on integration, which echoed many of the arguments in Britain on why 'immigrants don't integrate enough'. I found it ironic that in this elsewhere, where one tries to reconnect with their idea of home and tries to relearn their language, and to navigate belonging whilst feeling unwelcome, there would be a position on white Zimbabweans that echoed similar experiences. Of course, I am not here equating the experiences of black Zimbabweans in Britain to that of white Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe, or in Britain. The point is to highlight the disparity of absence. Yet the enduring colonial encounter connects both black and white Zimbabweans to Britain, and shapes experiences of the imagined inside and outside.

The assumed Dominican sister who came to attend mass and could speak Shona seems to get a pass, because she is both Catholic and can speak Shona, so supposedly she has 'integrated' well. I am not sure then how to feel about this, positions that I elucidate further in the section on whiteness as absence and my experiences of this absence in London.

In contrast to the early Zimfest that Catherine was not too hot on, she attended Africa Unplugged 2012.

> It was twenty acts from Africa. Afro beats were the thing, so most of them were on the line-up. It was on the same day as carnival [Notting Hill]. Winky D from Zimbabwe and Zahara from South Africa were on the line-up at Wembley

> arena. Lots of people had their Zim flags. I think I had a proudly Zimba moment, for once our own was on the line-up. I think 2012 was a breakthrough for Zim music … We had ana Stunner coming over, Africa Unplugged, Woza with ana Tuku and Busi Ncube. Zim music is now accessible online thank god addicts like myself can buy the music online and Vangodza can't rip me off!

My conversations with Catherine made me realise that something I had not considered in starting out, or had not contented with encountering, was the impact that technology, particularly the internet and music-sharing has had on diasporic formations (Crush et al., 2012), on how the constructions of home and belonging unfold. In an age saturated by the use of social media, one can see how these kinds of virtual communities have created a space in which an understanding of community can be derived, and a platform for performance of being Zimbabwean in Britain in multiple ways. Where for Wala's generation, sometimes people had to wait for records to be sent, or brought by someone from Zimbabwe, for Catherine's, Zimbabwean music is a click, a button or a device away. In addition to the physical transformation of place and space, digital technologies have shifted the way music is accessed, with the time-space compression of 'globalisation' in which a song can be released and be in another part of the world within minutes, even seconds. Zimbabweans in the diaspora have been active on online media platforms, debating the socio-political and economic issues, as well as connecting with home and reaffirming and reinventing what it means to be Zimbabwean (Manase, 2013; Mano & Willems, 2008, 2010; Moyo, 2007). It is no surprise that Catherine would be similarly increasingly accessing her music online. A recent example of how Zimbabweans engage with social media was the 'zvirikufaya' meme, Shona for things are good, or are going on well (Musekiwa, 2016). As Musekiwa has argued, through the positing of videos, sometimes accompanied by music, Zimbabweans in the diaspora would affirm that life, where they are, is good. Starting off by mostly displaying consumptive material, the videos moved to showing those in Zimbabwe similarly saying life was good. As a response to the idea that those in the diaspora are confronted with abjection, as those at home, the *zvirikufaya* videos became a space for rejecting abjection and social death, developing into a space where Zimbabweans could interact, use humour and satire to comment on both diasporic lives and the imaginings of home, and establishing a diasporic community on the internet.

With access to music in ways that would not have been imagined by previous generations, Catherine acknowledges that being in the elsewhere has engendered desires for different forms of Zimbabwean music, even those she would have previously not considered.

> Well, [being in] diaspora has got me listening to music I despised in Zimbabwe, the music that reminded you of kumusha [rural area] the music you heard mumakombi [taxis] and so on. If I were still in Zim I probably wouldn't be so much into Zim music. Although I did not appreciate this music, it takes me back home, it's the only way I can revive my memories with back home, hence why I have Chimurenga, music dzaana [by] Andy Brown and so forth. Zim-dancehall? Hmm, panebasa [that's a difficult task] typical tsaga [fool's] music lol. I enjoy going to the typical inaccessible concerts with the white folk . They are more organised you know, promoters ain't going to run off with your money. So yes [even though] diaspora puts everyone on same level, [it's] not as classist as Zim music still is.

Here the contradictions in Catherine's position are glaring. She is not pleased with her encounters with white Zimbabweans, whom she calls "Rhodies", and is eager to learn more Shona, in songs and in writing her own music. In listening to music she regards as belonging to the rural and the ordinary person, she invokes hierarchies of belonging, an assertion that, for the sake of reconstructing her mythic version of home, she will listen to these different types of music. Yet she would rather attend the "white" concerts because they are more organised, and she will not go so far as to indulge Zim-dancehall, the 'fool's music'. Yet again, diaspora becomes a sort of leveller, where the classist tendencies she herself is owning up to may not be as blatant. These tensions bring to the fore the kinds of negotiations of diasporic subjectivities relating to status and hierarchy (Fumanti, 2013) Catherine may be experiencing, where on one end there is a desire to claim space and belonging in this elsewhere, on the other, the attempt to reclaim a lost home brings into relief the internal contradictions and hierarchies that come with Zimbabwean musicking in the diaspora.

Through Catherine's experiences, one also begins to glean the margins occupied in imagining white Zimbabweans as part of a Zimbabwean diaspora, a space and identity occupied by a history and present of the enduring colonial encounter. To inhabit the body of a young black Zimbabwean woman is to experience religion, music and diaspora in ways that may be erased or subsumed in undifferentiated accounts of a hegemonic and homogenous 'being Zimbabwean'. Music remains crucial to Catherine's existence as a vehicle, a way to 'survive' diaspora. In this, and the gradual resistance and refusal to subscribe to dominant narratives of being a young Zimbabwean woman in the elsewhere, is that rejection of abjection and social death.

I have engaged in the above section with the intertwinement of religion and music in the negotiation of Zimbabwean being and belonging, through some of the experiences of a young Zimbabwean woman, Catherine. Religious places and spaces for Zimbabweans, also as places and spaces of musicking, are focal nodes in diasporic journeys, providing contested sites for the negotiating of simultaneously being at home and elsewhere, the home of the here, physically, and a further imagined elsewhere that comes with performing virtuous citizenship.

## Whiteness as Absence and Invisibility: Contesting the Idea of a Zimbabwean Identity

> My vulnerability would lie in romanticising blackness rather than demonising it; vilifying whiteness rather than reifying it. The kind of work I have always wanted to do requires me to learn how to manoeuvre ways to free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined chains … The imagination that produces work which bears and invites re-readings, which motions to future readings, as well as contemporary ones, implies a shareable world and an endlessly flexible language (Morrison, 2007:xi).

At this stage, I would like to begin what one must call a conclusion of this discussion by exploring what constitutes part of the generative possibilities of disrupting the dominant tropes and colourings of what it means to be Zimbabwean, and to embody this in the elsewhere. I say this because one can only fold a discussion of this manner, like an envelope, or turn a page, mark it and close the book, only to return to it later. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that the question of the historical production and reproduction of a 'Zimbabwean' identity is an ongoing and highly contested process (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009b). I am choosing to end here with whiteness as absence and invisibility to argue that this is an example of the erasures and silences that characterise writing and imagining the Zimbabwean diaspora, in Britain and elsewhere

If it is acknowledged that migrant and diasporic journeys are characterised in moments by abjection and the threat, or experiences of social death, what does the elision of the experiences of white Zimbabweans tell us? I am proposing here that this absence and invisibility, in my experience and the conceptualisations of being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, is another testament to the fractures, not just of the Zimbabwean diaspora, but of the idea of who and what constitutes Zimbabwe, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni also asks (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009a).

In referring here to white Zimbabweans as an already received category, I am utilising Steyn's understanding in relation to South Africa, which I argue, is very much close in

historical formation to that in Zimbabwe. Melissa Steyn has explored the contestations of whiteness in South Africa, and what she also calls "diasporic whiteness". Steyn forwards the position that whiteness in this context refers to an ideologically supported social positionality that has accrued to the people of European descent because of the political and economic advantage gained during and after European colonial expansion. This was facilitated by the construction of 'race' as a marker of entitlement. Whiteness then is the shared social space in which the psychological, cultural, political and economic dimensions of this privileged position are normalised and rendered unremarkable (Steyn, 2005).

Pasura, in his multi-sited ethnography of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain, noted the presence of some white Zimbabweans at the Vigil protests outside the Zimbabwean embassy. Here one respondent pointed out their discomfort at having white Zimbabweans there because they perceived them not as 'genuine political activists' but as being present to protect their economic interests. White Zimbabweans have been associated with funding the then opposition, MDC, and at a Zimfest event in London, some had been witnessed selling Rhodesian flags and artefacts (Pasura, 2011). These tensions seem to emanate from what I have called the enduring colonial encounter, and here produce hierarchies of identity and belonging, where some associate white Zimbabweans with claims to land and other economic interests, but maybe not with the kinds of conviviality, abjection and social death they imagine are faced by black Zimbabweans in the diaspora.

Whilst I perused the literature and the web, and tried to establish an understanding of the Zimbabwean landscape in Britain, I came across videos of a band of white Zimbabweans, performing songs in Shona at a Zimbabwe Achievers Awards event. In my work on Zimbabwean migration in South Africa, and here, I never imagined white Zimbabweans as migrant, although I was, and still am aware of the political contestations emanating from the colonial encounter, and especially from the land reform programme. My encounter with this band, albeit on video, made me excited about the possibilities that this presented.

One can recognise here the ironies of absence and invisibility in contexts in which whiteness is sanitised, and hegemonic, and the contradictions that witnessing this

musical performance, and the absences therein, elicit in me. What is the soundtrack of a collective Zimbabwean identity? Was there ever such a thing as 'white Zimbabwean music'? What then are the ramifications of this understanding of absence and invisibility, as manifest in the construction of collective representations and in other aspects of Zimbabwean being and belonging?

In the several years that I have spent in London, I cannot say that I have had many encounters with self-identified white Zimbabweans. I was fortunate to witness the band, Kamikaze Test Pilots, perform songs in Shona in August of 2013, where the novelty of white Zimbabweans did not go unnoticed, and also elicited conversation around why it would be special for people identified as Zimbabweans to sing in one of the languages of the country.

I engage here with the event of the performance, as well as some of the fractures amongst Zimbabweans in Britain, as a way of asking what it means to be Zimbabwean in the context of the fictions of the postcolonial, and a loud silence around such issues as white Zimbabweans and whiteness, and its place as part of Zimbabwean migration. One is tempted to also imagine that study the black body, black Zimbabweans, is accessible, and convenient as spectacle, as even for me, thinking whiteness seems to constitute 'studying up' (Cassell, 1988; Gusterson, 1997; Nader, 1972; Ortner, 2010; Schneider, 2016; Schrijvers, 1991), as I show through some of the instances I encountered contested Zimbabwean identities, as well as the work on Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean migration has shown.

I historicise this specific moment of white Zimbabwean music through correspondence I had with Fred Zindi, and the general historical position of being white and Zimbabwean in music. Rather than view this as an excursion into just either the materiality or abstracted realms of whiteness, I am taking this as part of those generational and generative possibilities of asking what Zimbabwean being in Britain is, or constitutes.

Against the background that I have given, of the understanding of Zimbabwe coming to the fore, especially after the year 2000 and the displacement of white farmers, and the narratives that ensued, how do we, following Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, argue the

existence of this nascent, fragmentary and floundering thing, this postcolonial fiction of, like many a nation, Zimbabwe. I am trying, as Nayak (2006) to explore the possibilities of conceptually rupturing the binary, as well the idea of Zimbabwe.

A similar space to Rollers also began to run Sunday barbecues. Hosted at Goals, a sports facility which seems to regularly host five-a-side football, the character and set up was reminiscent of Rollers, with a similar cover charge, security, barbecue space and music inside.

The man in charge of the Eltham space, who I came to know as just Charlie, I had first met at the Paul Lunga gig in Brixton. We chatted for a bit as I explained to him my interest in Zimbabwean music and my research, and then we exchanged numbers. As should be no surprise at this stage, it is Wala who took me to the place several times, so we could try a different space to Rollers. Specifically, it was so that we could also catch some of the performances I have referred to, of Zim-dancehall and by other Zimbabwean artists such as Pah Chihera who were touring.

Architecturally, the place is not vastly different to Rollers. It has a bar inside where patrons can buy alcohol, but does not have a stage inside. No indoor stage meant that during performances, we had to stand around in a semicircle, and were not always best positioned to see the performers in a bigger crowd, and if taller people stood in front of us.

The Eltham space can be viewed as rivalling and complementing Rollers at the same time. The heterogeneity of taste and preferences for different space sees Zimbabweans visiting these places. Eltham would offer different kinds of music, pushing its identity as a place that offers Zimbabweans a lot of musical performances from many of the young and popular artists in Zimbabwe. It is at this place that I witnessed the first and only performance by white Zimbabweans during my fieldwork.

## Tracing the Story of White Zimbabwean Music(ians): Some Insights from Fred Zindi

In order to gain a better insight into music that I had little experience of in Zimbabwe, and which was current at a time I would not have been born, or been a toddler, I posed some questions to Fred Zindi about white Zimbabwean music, as a subject he has experience in. According to Zindi, in the 1970s and early 1980s there were several white musicians in Zimbabwe such as Robert and Allan Zipper of the Otis Waygood Band, The Heritage Band, Stallion, Klunk, Nick Pickard, Iris Jones, Clem Tholet, Noreen Welsh, The Gutter Band, Steve Roskilly and Martin Norris. Today, those musicians are now conspicuous by their absence.

Zindi last met the Zippers in London several years ago, when they were operating the Zipper Mobile recording studio. Their drummer later joined a reggae band called Tribesman. Older Zimbabweans may remember the days of blues, the twist, soul and rock 'n' roll:

> These musical concepts were borrowed from Britain and America. The radio in Zimbabwe before 1980 was filled with music from names like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Rolling Stones, Grand Funk Railroad, Deep Purple, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Wishbone Ash, The Stranglers, The Beatles, Cliff Richard, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix. Music festivals which followed the trends of these British and American musicians were organised in Zimbabwe. Most black groups and individual black musicians began to sound like Otis Redding, Arthur Conley, Wilson Picket or Sam and Dave to the extent that some musicians began to give themselves Soul names such as Soul Evans, Soul Sam, Soul Amos and Hilton Mambo, the Soulman. Most of the white bands stuck to rock music. Black and white bands would get together in what was termed Rock Band Contest and compete for the title of 'The Best Band'. It was amazing to see how thousands of young people of all races, Africans, Coloured, Europeans and Asians were united under the banner of Rock Music in a country that did not allow races to mix.

The Rhodesian scenes cannot be repeated in today's Zimbabwe, because almost all the white musical groups have disappeared from the scene. The last time there was a

prominent white musician in Zimbabwe was in 2005. This was David Scobie, 'a young man with a big voice' as Zindi put it. However, David Scobie has since relocated to the 'greener' pastures of the United Kingdom. One of the reasons he gave for leaving Zimbabwe was that local white artistes in Southern Africa were not taken seriously, as people who bought white music preferred imported music. He felt that he was being taken as a bit of a novelty act.

David Scobie was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1964. He was raised on traditional Scottish music which influenced his musical interest. In 1973 he emigrated with his parents to Rhodesia. He attended Nettleton Primary School in Arcadia between 1973 and 1977. After that he attended Cranborne Boys High School from 1978 until 1979 before proceeding to Prince Edward Boys High School in 1980.

After school, David went into music full time. By 1975, David Scobie was appearing regularly at the Beverley Rocks Motel Folk Club in Salisbury. During this time, Scobie was further influenced by Zimbabwean folk singer, Iris Jones, as well as Neil Diamond. As a result, he started to write his own songs. David Scobie approached Martin Norris at Shed Studios in Salisbury who facilitated a recording deal for him. Martin penned Scobie's debut single 'Gypsy Girl' and it went straight to number one in Zimbabwe and number four in South Africa. He started to work at Shed Studios where he was instrumental in making commercial jingles for various companies. It was during this period that he released his first album, 'Cleaning Up' which was a follow-up to 'Gypsy Girl'.

The second album 'Reborn', (nothing to do with religion) was released in South Africa. The third and fourth albums, 'Photograph' and 'Special Edition' were released in Zimbabwe. They didn't have the same impact as 'Cleaning Up'.

David Scobie joined the bandwagon of musicians who have left Zimbabwe for social, economic or political reasons. Zimbabwe, which has a vibrant musical history and culture, and its musicians have dauntlessly played their music within the country's borders and abroad, working hard to preserve and develop the country's rich musical legacy, which has in the past twenty years lost several prominent musicians, like Thomas Mapfumo, to the diaspora.

In Zimbabwe, today, one of the prominent white voices in music has been Sam Monrro, popularly known as Comrade Fatso. Makina notes that Comrade Fatso's music has appeal because of how it explores the socio-political and economic issues confronting Zimbabwe (Makina, 2009). In calling himself Comrade Fatso, and in his songs, Monro both goes against being stereotyped as a white Zimbabwean, identifying with the 'masses' as well as poking fun at the politics of Zimbabwe with the use of the term comrade. With other young Zimbabweans, Monro also embarked on a satirical news programme called Zambezi news, which uses humour, the way Willems has argued, to respond to an environment in which public talk and oral culture are common and as a reaction to the strenuous attempt to crush dissent (Willems, 2010, 2011a, 2011b).

So, if there was a white Zimbabwean music scene, whither white Zimbabweans and music in the diaspora?

## Kamikaze Test Pilots at the Gochi-Gochi

Having watched some videos online of the white Zimbabwean band perform, an opportunity to watch them performing live presented itself when I was invited by Wala to accompany him to Eltham. As usual, it was on Sunday when the *gochi-gochi* was on, and I was not sure I wanted to go all the way to Eltham. At the time of the invite, I was not aware that this band would be performing. I had been informed the performances would feature artists from Zimbabwe, such as Nduna and Pah Chihera and Sniper. Nduna had been a hit with songs such as 'Kana Ndinewe' and 'Ndagutsikana', and Sniper, who is a forerunner of Zim-dancehall from his songs 'Kubhinya' to the more recent 'Love Yemusoja'.

We arrived to a pleasant entrance, thanks to Wala's acquaintance with Charlie, who allowed us to go through the gate without paying the customary £5. I felt relieved that at least I had an extra £5 for some sadza and barbecue. If I had come without Wala, I was sure to have paid. Those hierarchies of belonging come into being again. Yet I was also aware of the respect Wala commanded, as many knew his role in promoting Zimbabwean music, and how his love for the music meant he continued promoting such events even when he was not directly involved. I consequently was a beneficiary

of his long history at the centre of the African music scene in London, and sometimes reaped the big rewards of £5 saved!

We made the customary rounds, greeting people Wala knew, buying some meat and getting it on the barbecue. By the time we were done eating there was a sizeable crowd, but not as big as one would have imagined. I was informed that because the *gochi-gochis* were taking place at the same time, people ended up being split between attending one or the other. It would seem a fiction to tell someone in Zimbabwe that Zimbabweans in Britain would be, for a period during summer, spoilt for choice of barbecues, and food and live music. Well, live to the extent that there would be someone singing, but mostly a DJ and a singer, as Wala bemourned earlier.

Except that on that day, the Kamikaze Test Pilots were performing. After finishing the food and washing our hands, we headed for the bar to get some drinks. Just as I was about to walk across the space were a semblance of a stage had been set up, I saw several white men walk in with their equipment, guitars and amplifiers and the like. From the reaction of the people around me, they were a surprise for sure. I forgot about drinks, and stood there watching the band get ready for their performance, until they started. They covered among others, songs by Marshall Munhumumwe, Leonard Dembo, and a seemingly customary 'Nyoka Musango', which I had seen them perform on various videos.

Part of me wondered why seeing a white Zimbabwean band elicited the kinds of excitement and surprise, both in me and the other Zimbabweans that were present. Were they also being treated as a novelty act, the way Zindi says David Scobie felt? Their sound and rhythm was close, some said, but were not to the point. The appreciation seemed to come from the fact that at least they were trying. Unlike the teachers of Catherine's childhood, and the imaginary of the *baas*, the farmer who speaks Shona, or a mutilation of it, to instruct or command, here was a group accessing a space that remained predominantly black and Zimbabwean, through music.

Although they did not perform for long before they packed up and left, apparently for another gig, there was no doubt that they made an impression every time they

performed, much like the way videos are constantly circulated on social media of when a white Zimbabwean is captured speaking in Shona. One time it was a video of an old white man insulting Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwean government using obscenities in Shona, and the other it was a young white Zimbabwean woman, Gemma Griffiths who had remixed on piano a Zim-dancehall song 'Musarova Big Man' by Winky D. Like the Kamikaze Test Pilots, Gemma had also been invited to perform at the Zimbabwe Achievers Awards, setting her in a place that recognises white Zimbabweans as part of Zimbabwean conviviality and resistance to abjection and social death in the elsewhere, albeit as one of the few moments that seems apparent.

As the account by Fred Zindi shows, a more prominent white music scene existed in Rhodesia than in Zimbabwe. It seems, from my experience of the field, that the absence of this scene in post-independence Zimbabwe is commensurate with the kinds of absences and erasures in dominant narratives about Zimbabwean migrations and the diaspora. The kinds of segregation that characterised Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, and the aftermath of land reclamation and the post-2000 moment seem to have driven narratives of white Zimbabweans to the forefront outside the kinds of musicking that those like the Kamikaze Test Pilots and Gemma engage in.

Whilst writing, seated in a café in North London, a white lady sitting next to me asked me all of a sudden if I was from Zimbabwe. She said she had heard me speak, and my accent reminded her of home. "Home, you say?" I asked. She spoke to me first in Ndebele then in Shona. Once she had established I was Zimbabwean, she had a lot to say to me. She told me how she missed home and how her two children have not been to Zimbabwe yet. Do I cook sadza at home, she asked, and eat it with my hands? "It's hard here man, I left a big house at home, then I came here, living in the *small small* place", she said this whilst gesticulating with her hands and showing the differences in size, as if I could imagine it. "I was born and grew up in Bulawayo." Bu-le-we-yo, she said it with her accent from 'home'. Shen then moved on, as my partner was sitting across me, to tell us about a certain genealogy of blackness in her family, and how she has mixed children. She was once expelled from school for kissing a black boy in Zimbabwe. "I am a free spirit; you need to resist some of these things." Did I know this Rasta guy from Zim? What about Tendai, he lives close by? No, I don't know any Tendai.

As one of the most sustained conversations I had with someone self-identifying as a white Zimbabwean, it was a gift to me for her to volunteer her life story in the short time she was in the café, yet it was also strange, as I inhabited unfamiliar territory. I did not follow the Kamikaze Test Pilots when they were done to introduce myself and my research, neither did I try to look for them or other white Zimbabwean artists. I became aware, as I pondered more on the absences, of my own anxiety that arose from my assumptions of what it meant to be a white Zimbabwean, separate from my being Zimbabwean, and the internalised complexes, which suggested that trying to peer into the lives of white Zimbabweans would be studying up.

Here, I am making the case, as I come to the close of this bounded conversation, for seeing the absences and invisibility of white Zimbabweans not just as a case of my personal anxieties, but as a product of hegemonic narratives of Zimbabwe and its elsewhere. The construction of the Zimbabwean migrant and the experiences of crisis and abjection have centered different bodies in the service of imaginings deriving, I argue, from the colonial encounter. If someone like the woman who regaled me with her stories of Bulawayo and kissing black boys in Zimbabwe understands and experiences certain kinds of abjection, why are these experiences not constitutive of the migrant and diasporic as are those of black Zimbabweans?

## Conclusion

After living in London for four years, one of which constituted the 'official' fieldwork, I recognise even more the partiality of narratives, and the shifting nature of the everyday for Zimbabweans in a migrant context like Britain. I followed Wala all over London, became part of the Zimbabwean social scene, went to church religiously, refused to be roped into singing in a choir and cooked at the Notting Hill Carnival for four consecutive years. This is just part of what I did, in steeping myself in the Zimbabwean experience in London. Even then, I remain a *mafikizolo*, constantly negotiating being and belonging with other Zimbabweans. It reminds one that being in a place for four, or ten, or thirty years is not in itself to have grown roots enough to cease to negotiate belonging. The politics of Zimbabwe, that I thought I was somehow avoiding in not focusing on spaces like the Vigil, remain integral, as pushing Zimbabweans to Britain, and shaping their relationships to the elsewhere and other Zimbabweans.

The different ethnographic moments and episodes have shown that musicking has historically been, and remains, a thread that ties the different generational and generative possibilities, and their experiences of London and Britain. The paradox of diaspora is that the longer one has been away from 'home', the stronger and more vivid their mythical construction and desiring of the place they imagine still exists, which cannot in all possibility be returned to. As the Zimbabwean diaspora becomes more entrenched in Britain, it is apparent from my experiences that people inhabit the interstices, caught between the here and there, making place and home here, and desiring the imagined place of their dislocation. Another tension arises from the constant reiterations of strangeness and otherness that those in the elsewhere must live with. To be black, and strange, is to inhabit a zone of non-being, to stare precarity in the face, and to be threatened with social death and abjection.

In the process of writing, I had to work hard to not constantly return to friends, places, spaces and events that I would find Zimbabweans and Zimbabwean music. I still wanted to ask questions, to get what I imagined would be better answers. The field was not a place I had returned from, it was both on the inside and outside of me, as I was of it. This means then being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, and the responses to

abjection, are not experiences that I leave in the field in the moment of ethnographic translation, or that now abide in print. I, with many other Zimbabweans, continue to fight for legibility and against abjection, which means the work of writing Zimbabwe should not conclude anytime soon. Unless of course the country, Zimbabwe, concludes its existence through socio-political and economic crisis, outside of the writing. I entered the field as already marked, as Zimbabwean. This obviously shaped my positionality and how I engaged with the field, and consequently how I translate these ethnographic experiences.

The time I spent with different Zimbabweans made me aware that Zimbabwean presence in Britain is certainly not a post-2000 phenomenon. Enduring colonial encounters mean Zimbabweans have been part of the black and diasporic experience in Britain. At least in the case of Wala and those of his generation I encountered, who came to Britain in the mid-to-late '70s, and even those, like Catherine, who are younger, but have to contend with similar struggles, made different by virtue of being a young black woman in Britain.

Contending with the negotiation of being, belonging and identity in Britain through music here is also seen to entail grappling with affect, with feelings, the absence and longing for the being-at-home feeling. To be strange and Other arouses the sense of dislocation, out of which songs, places and spaces of Zimbabwean musicking come to embody conviviality and collective representations that become anchors and nodes on this diasporic journey.

The desire for a stable anchoring is what also produces the relationships that some Zimbabweans have to the church, as they reconstruct, reproduce, resist and reinvent the moral economies that govern being away from home. Religion and the church for some Zimbabweans are certainly ways of establishing a virtuous citizenship, an imagining of home in the here and the hereafter. The stability of religion is however itself contested, in the case of Catherine, based on gender and the constraining moral economies that the church imposes. Granted, the church remains a platform for community and a buffer against the kinds of exclusion and abjection diaspora sometimes brings.

Although Zimbabwean migrations have come to the forefront in the context of socio-economic and political decline in Zimbabwe post-2000, the recognition of the different phases of Zimbabwean migration, and the cracks and crevices of silence and erasure occupied by Zimbabweans, offers the possibility of writing Zimbabwe and being Zimbabwean differently. The production and circulation of knowledges coloured, if not by the colonial encounter and the enduring coloniality, by hegemonies of representations should be contested. This call to writing Zimbabwe differently, and to continue exploring complexity, constitutes in part the decolonial option, and in others, confronting earnestly black conviviality and frivolity.

The task of providing an exploration of complexity is going to always be fraught. It is especially so when engaging with a diaspora that remains mobile and a politics, in Zimbabwe and in Britain, that is increasingly fragile. Further, it is more pressing when one inhabits a body that, like those who are branded migrant and Other, is regarded as deserving of expulsion. The shifts in politics in Britain and the rest of the 'Western' world portend difficult times for those already on the margins, especially inhabiting the category of migrant. This means continuing work on what it means to be in this elsewhere in the context of a shifting and increasingly hostile politics. Crucially, this is because these categories inhabited have material consequences, in denying conviviality, frivolity, bringing exclusion, deportation and death. One hopes the task of 'humanising' those confronted with increasing precarity, abjection and social death has no conclusion, in the face of a collapsing humanism.

There is room for further explorations of music and migration amongst Zimbabweans outside this work, not just in Britain, but other countries like South Africa, Australia, Canada, and other places where constellations of the Zimbabwean diaspora are to be found. The precedence of work on Zimbabweans in Britain is already set with the various studies cited in the foregoing discussion, which I hope can be enriched by extending their explorations to the different ways in which Zimbabweans construct convivial spaces and musick against abjection and social death. The ubiquitous presence and use of technology also means that more attention can be paid to how Zimbabweans are increasingly engaging in virtual diasporic formations. In this age of the 'selfie', where being and belonging is manufactured in virtual realms, the way Zimbabwean musicking becomes part of such virtual productions and circulations of

diasporic and transnational culture. Similarly, a more concerted excursion into the area of gender is warranted. Whilst I juxtapose mainly the experience of an older Zimbabwean man and a younger Zimbabwean woman, and draw from work on Zimbabwean music and Zimbabweans in the diaspora in Britain, further explorations on gendered musicking, as well as the transformations of gender identities in the Zimbabwean diaspora is required. This is especially so in the case of sexuality and the kinds of hegemonic heteronormative ideals that shaped being a Zimbabwean man or woman in the elsewhere. Does this largely remain the case in an elsewhere of negotiation and reinvention?

I ended with the section on white Zimbabweans and white Zimbabwean music precisely because I also wanted to set the tone for the possibilities that this brings to the work on the Zimbabwean diaspora. In addition to the other fractures that accompany being Zimbabwean in the elsewhere, of gender, age and generation, among others, the silences around the racial imaginary and the Zimbabwean migrant body needs to be unsettled. As Zimbabwe as a nation struggles with its own identification against narratives of nation and struggle facing parochial reinventions, 'privatised' and patriotic history, it is important to engage in work that reveals the historical and contemporary complexities of what and who constitutes Zimbabwe. It is especially important in the case of white Zimbabweans in Britain because of the enduring colonial encounter between the countries, and the significance of writing against the dangers of exclusionary and essentialising narratives.

If the politics of home also follow those in, and shape, the diaspora and vice versa, how do we respond to the hegemonies of the past and the present in how we explore diaspora? For to be Zimbabwean, white, black or any other categories of identifications and the attendant histories, is to inhabit a world in which we all resist abjection and social death.

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